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THE RUINED ABBEYS OF
YORKSHIRE



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FOUNTAINS ABBEY

THE RUINED ABBEYS OF YORKSHIRE

BY

W. CHAMBERS LEFROY, F.S.A.

WITH MANY ILLUSTRATIONS BY

A. BRUNET-DEBAINES AND H. TOUSSAINT

New Edition

LONDON
SEELEY AND CO., LIMITED
ESSEX STREET, STRAND

1891

NA
5469
Y5L52

TO

HEYWOOD SUMNER

THIS SKETCH

IS INAPPROPRIATELY, BUT AFFECTIONATELY,

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PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION

IN revising these sheets for a second edition I have been, once more, largely indebted to the kindness of antiquarian friends.

In particular I have been allowed to anticipate in some points a forthcoming work on Fountains Abbey by Mr. Micklethwaite and Mr. W. S. John Hope.

- Within the last seven years much fresh light has been thrown on monastic antiquities by minute examination and patient inquiry, and the impossibility of dealing exhaustively with even a section of this subject in anything short of a large and technical work has become proportionately evident.

Since, however, the circumstance that our ruined abbeys are not only picturesque features in English landscape but also important historical monuments can no longer be ignored, the humblest contributor to the literature of the subject is bound to deal to

some extent with facts, and in so doing to take pains to be as often right and as seldom wrong as may be. The architectural and antiquarian statements scattered among these pages are doubtless not free from error and will seem to some readers defective in quantity and coherence. I have not, however, been so presumptuous as to write for the learned, and I have tried hard to avoid either misleading or wearying the ignorant.

Thus, for example, while a small proportion only of the discoveries made, since the first edition of this book, by Mr. Hope at St. Agatha's has been here referred to, I am not aware that any point in which he has disproved my former statements or conjectures has been left uncorrected.

CHURCH CROOKHAM,

August 1890.

PREFACE

THE history of monasticism planned by Southey yet remains to be written. To that much-needed work Northumbria will supply a long and most important chapter, which I am far from claiming to have anticipated.

These papers first appeared in an artistic periodical, and for such a purpose monasticism is to its buildings somewhat as the cultus of the Virgin to Florentine art. We cannot get from this glorious group of ruins the best and deepest enjoyment, or reveal to others the secret of their charm, without a certain familiarity, and at least an imaginative sympathy, with the spirit which wrought in and still lingers near them. The architect, the antiquary, the artist, are not or should not be distinct ; and he who has not in him something of the three is scarcely worthy to travel in regions so lovely and so eloquent. Nor must we be impatient of a certain sadness in our subject—"He that lacks time to mourn, lacks

time to mend," and sober colouring is not always gloom. For me the unfruitfulness of my earliest visits to monastic ruins, and the pleasant memory of all I owe to the companions of my latest, bid me hope that these pages may be to some few the key of an unsuspected door, tempting them to sojourn and search where they were only wont to "glance, and note, and bustle by." The frequent allusion to the plans and notes of Messrs. J. Henry Middleton and J. T. Micklethwaite, Fellows of the Society of Antiquaries, are to some extent an acknowledgment of the help I have derived from them, but not of the generous sympathy and congenial intercourse, in which lies all the charm and half the value of such aid.

Many of the scenes faithfully depicted here by Mr. Brunet-Debaines are associated with personal experiences of Yorkshire hospitality, which have softened, if they could not banish, regretful thoughts of the guest-house of the monks. And yet, because the unremembered past, like the dim future, stirs within us, we long to lodge for one night with a Benedictine host—seeing the old world and the forsaken ways.

KENSINGTON,

December 1882.

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THE RUINED ABBEYS OF YORKSHIRE

I

ST. MARY'S, YORK

SOME years ago a countryman put to a traveller in the neighbourhood of Furness Abbey the following question: "About those monks, sir—I sometimes wonder, and perhaps you can tell me—were they really black men?"

From this perfectly true story we may learn that there are depths of ignorance on the subject of monasticism beneath even our own or our neighbour's. We may reflect, too, if we please, on the fleeting nature of fame and the slender trace that so much power, and wealth, and zeal have left behind. Only let us, at the same time, be careful to seem, at least, to know that, though English monasteries were not inhabited by black *men*, they were, in many cases, by

black *monks*—so narrow is the boundary between truth and error—and that these dusky antediluvians were called Benedictines.

How many of us learn abroad to interest ourselves in that which we have ignored a hundred times at home. In the Vatican, the Pitti Palace, the Brera, the Louvre, we are familiar, for instance, with a figure, draped now in white and now in black, sometimes bearded and sometimes beardless, here with crosier in hand and mitred head, there rolling, emaciated, in a bed of thorns, but testifying, by this very variety of treatment, to the manifold and dramatic interest which, to the eye of faith, centred in the name of St. Benedict. And yet long ago, at York, it may be, or at Whitby, in the outskirts of Leeds or of Ripon, or in the quiet dales of the Ure and the Rye, we have been face to face with this remarkable man in the intimate expression of his mind and the immediate outcome of his life. For without St. Benedict there had been no St. Mary of York, and without St. Mary of York there had been no St. Mary of Fountains.

Yes; this saint, this mystic, this superstitious monk, who seems so much at home in the pictures of far-off popish ages and the galleries of far-off popish lands, did actually find foothold in Yorkshire,

making what is now a land of moors and mills a land of moors and monasteries, and leaving among the sportsmen and manufacturers of to-day a mark hitherto indelible.

Of nearly twenty monastic ruins of which Yorkshire has reason to be proud, or ashamed, seven only—those, viz., of Bolton, Kirkham, St. Agatha, Eggleston, Guisborough, Mount Grace, and Coverham—belong to non-Benedictine orders. York, Selby, and Fountains, the only mitred abbeys in the county, were Benedictine; Whitby, “the Westminster of the Northumbrian kings,” revived from two hundred years of spoliation and neglect at the touch of Benedictine hands.

The monastic ruins of England are the witnesses to an historic fact which is too apt to be forgotten or neglected. We all know there was monasticism in England before the Reformation; for were there not monasteries to be suppressed by the providential rapacity of Henry VIII? But we are inclined to relegate their history to the regions of ecclesiology and others equally dusty and obscure; forgetting, if we ever knew, that they were interwoven with the fibre of our national life—bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. And yet our hotels, our workhouses, our refuges, and probably a dozen other familiar modern

institutions, have been morally, and too often materially, built out of their ruins.¹ In them our parliaments met, our annals were composed, our classics copied and preserved ; and, what is even more important, in them the very humanity which we inherit once found fit utterance for its superhuman aspirations, and, how blindly and wrongly soever, poured out its

¹ "The leasehold tenants of abbey lands were, in fact, the most enviable members of the agricultural class in the Middle Ages, and the monks set an example of agricultural improvement to all other landlords. Hospitality and charity were practised on a vast scale, and some historians regard the regular distribution of alms at the convent door, or the dinner open to all comers in the refectory, as the mediæval substitute for the poor-law system. Considering how unequally the monasteries were scattered over the face of the country, such direct relief can only have been accessible to a small proportion of the rural poor, even where it was not capriciously bestowed ; but the civilising influences of monasteries doubtless extended far more widely, and were especially valuable in the north of England, where private estates were of enormous size, and where resident landowners were therefore few and far between. When merchants, with a shrewd eye to business, and often living in London or other towns, succeeded the benevolent monks, as they were succeeding the free-handed nobles and knights, it must have fared ill at first with the weaker members of the labouring class. The dissolution of monasteries thus became a secondary cause of the great agrarian revolution which marked the sixteenth century, and which laid the foundation of the present English land-system. The *north of England*, where the monasteries had been almost the only centres of culture and improvement, appears to have suffered most by their dissolution, as the south gained most by the growth of London and the extension of intercourse with the Continent." — *English Land and English Landlords*, by the Hon. George C. Brodrick. Cf. Hallam, *Middle Ages*, 12th edition, vol. iii. p. 360.

soul through hundreds of dark and troubled years—confessing and leaving on record that after all it had a soul and sought a country.

But here in St. Mary's Abbey—371 feet long and 60 broad—or there at Jervaulx, where, with scarcely one stone of the church still left upon another, the very domestic buildings strike and impress us with their mass and grand proportions, it is impossible quite to shut one's eyes to all this. It is not only because they illustrate a chapter or two in the history of architecture, still less because most of them stand under picturesquely wooded hills and by quiet streams, that these ruins are worth visiting. As long as there is the merest ground-plan to be traced, their human interest appeals to men and women of every creed but that of sheer stupidity.

In York, where the very names of streets are monuments of antiquity, and the relics of Roman, Saxon, and Dane are gathered under the shadow of one of the finest cathedrals in the world, it is a little hard to turn aside into a trim garden and fix our attention upon the ruins of an abbey. Bootham, the subject of our illustration, is one among a hundred points of interest, and even when we hear of "Mary-gate" and "Monk-bar," we are more struck by their last syllables than their first. There is an instant

and pleasurable surprise in finding ourselves in a place where a bar means a gate and a gate means something quite different; but it is not till abbey after abbey with endless similarity and endless variety has brought home to us the solemn beauty and deep significance of monastic ruins, that we can contentedly give them the attention they deserve.

And who, meanwhile, was St. Benedict? It is soon told; but the "historical imagination" must wing its flight over more than thirteen centuries to listen. The date of his birth was near the end of the fifth century; the place was Nursia, in the Duchy of Spoleto. At an early age Benedict was sent by his parents to study at Rome; but the story of his flight from thence, at the age of fourteen, agrees with the description afterwards given of him by St. Gregory the Great, as "scienter nesciens et sapienter indoctus."

Escaping, not without difficulty, from the faithful nurse who had accompanied him to Rome, this precocious ascetic concealed himself on the then desolate shore of Subiaco. Here he quickly became famous; and from hence, after only three years, he was summoned to preside as abbot over a neighbouring monastery. Once more he withdrew to solitude and an even greater severity of life. As time went on he was followed into his seclusion by a motley



BOOTHAM BAR, YORK

crowd of disciples. From the old world Roman nobles sent their sons to be rescued from the “deep weariness and sated lust” which to themselves “made human life a hell ;” from the new the wild Goth came to learn the first elements of civilisation.

Taking with him a few followers, Benedict now founded a monastery on Monte Cassino, the destined scene of his bold rebuke to Totila, the Gothic king. Already no less than twelve religious houses, each with its own superior, bore witness to his influence ; and in 515 he composed the famous *Regula Monachorum*. In obedience to that rule the stones of a hundred ruined abbeys lie to-day in English fields—the silent witnesses and unanswerable arguments of the past.

On such more personal matters as the devotion to St. Benedict of Scolastica, his sister, and of Maurus, Placidus, and Flavia, his friends, this is not the place to dwell. Art, which delights to gild in retrospect the path which the saint has trod, “not without dust and heat,” lingers tenderly over their loves. Let us remember their names, at least, when we read of Chaucer’s degenerate fourteenth-century Benedictine :

“ The rule of St. Maure and of St. Benait,
Because that it was old and somedeal strait,
This ilke monk let olde thinges pace,
And held after the newe world the trace.”

Twice in the *Regula* of St. Benedict there occurs an expression which, because it is certainly picturesque and probably characteristic, seems to justify quotation. It is required of him who aspires to dwell in "the tabernacle of God's kingdom," that he be one who, "turning away the eyes of his heart from the wicked devil who tempts him, hath taken the young thoughts which he hath bred and dashed them to pieces on Christ." They are words which, with the final exhortation, "never to despair of the mercy of God," may not unfitly be remembered in the scenes we are about to visit, recording as they do the uncompromising austerity from which monasticism repeatedly declined, and the hope which it dared to proclaim amid the blackness of the world's eclipse.

Between the Benedictine order (reformed and unreformed) and the various branches of the Augustinian, the monks, as distinguished from friars, may be said to have been divided, for all the "religious" who did not conform to the rule of St. Benedict were gathered at a subsequent period into at least a nominal unity under the name and patronage of the famous bishop of Hippo.

From quite primitive times there had been lonely hermits who

“ Hurried torn with inward strife
The wilderness to seek,”

and there had long since begun to group themselves into such semblance of coenobite monasticism as we are familiar with in Kingsley's *Hypatia*. But this development had been checked by the storm that ushered in the night of the dark ages, and it was left to St. Benedict to systematise, in harmony with the requirements of his day, the traditions and forces of asceticism.

Working to some extent upon the lines of SS. Pachomius and Basil, he gave to his order a uniformity never before attained, and enjoined upon its members the unaccustomed discipline of manual labour. So strongly was the former point insisted on, that many existing monasteries were deliberately destroyed by the early Benedictines in order to raise upon their sites buildings suited to the requirements of the new rule.

Within the walls of a Benedictine precinct was to be included all that its inmates might lawfully desire.¹ Running water, mill, bakehouse, stable, cow-shed, workshops, must be there. A short description of

¹ For the accompanying plan of the conventional buildings of Westminster, as well as for much other invaluable help, the author of these pages is indebted to his friends, Professor J. Henry Middleton and Mr. J. T. Micklethwaite.

the ordinary plan of such a monastery will be useful and should not be without interest. We cannot do better than borrow largely, though with certain necessary modifications, from Professor Willis's account of the Conventual Buildings of Canterbury. We will take the cloister-court as our nucleus. To the north rises the nave of the great church; to the east the south transept, chapter-house, and "calefactorium," or common warming house of the monks; on the south are the "frater," kitchen, buttery, etc.; and on the west probably cellars and a "parlatorium," where visitors may be interviewed. Over the calefactorium and vestibule of the chapter-house, and communicating by a staircase with the south transept of the church, we may expect to find the "dorter." North of the church is the "outer cemetery," the burial-ground of the laity, and east of this the "inner cemetery" for the monks. Outside the cloister are halls and chambers for purposes of hospitality. Southwards lies a large entrance court, which separates the strictly monastic buildings from the workshops and offices and the dwelling of the lay brothers. Southwest of this court is a great hall known as the *Aula Nova*, and supposed to have been the *hospitium* (guest-house) of the paupers. Beyond this again, and in fact outside the precinct, is the almonry for

relief of the poor. At Canterbury the cloister-court is on the north side of the church, and the cemetery on the south; but the above is the more usual arrangement.

The cloister, or at least its north wall, is often glazed and supplied with seats for study. A passage under the "dorter" leads to the smaller cloister—that of the infirmary. Here are a separate hall and chapel. The guest-house for strangers of rank includes a dining-hall, bed-rooms (each containing several beds), stables, servants' rooms, kitchen, bakehouse, brew-house, and store-room. Visitors of less distinction had to put up with humbler quarters. Stranger monks are allowed to eat in the "frater," and therefore only require a sitting-room and dormitory.

If we remember that the word "frater," which has sometimes been wrongly translated "common-room," is only another name for the refectory, we shall now be in a position to understand the description given in *Piers the Ploughman's Creed*, of a monastery of another order—that of "Preaching Friars."

" Than cam I to that cloystre, and gaped abouten
Whough it was pilered and peynt and portreyd well clene,
Al tyled with leed, lowe to the stones,
And ypaved with poyntll, ich poynt after other,
With cundites of clen tyn closed al aboute
With lavoures of lattin, loveliche ygreithed.—

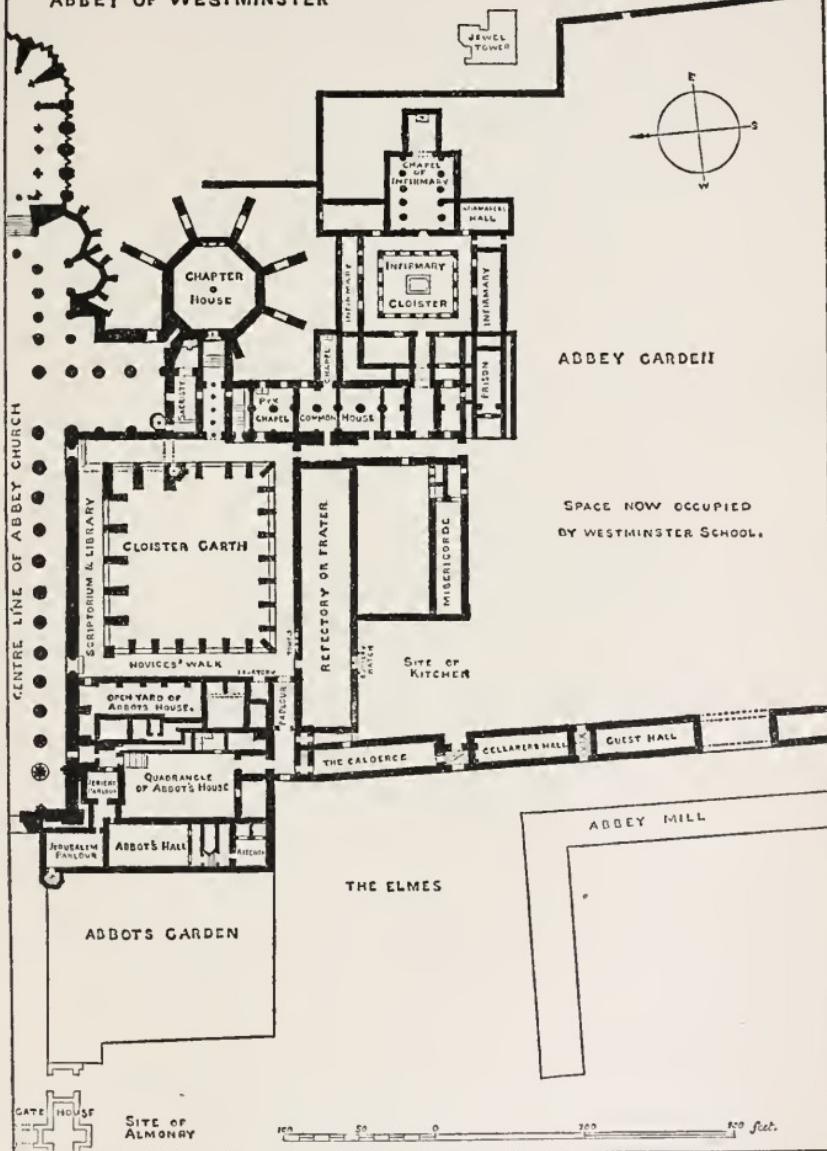
—Thane was the chapitre house wrought as a great chirch
 Corven and covered, ant queytelehe entayled
 With semliche selure yset on lofte
 As a parlement house ypeynted aboute.
 Thanne ferd I into *fraytoure*, and fond there a nother
 An halle for an hygh kynge, an household to holden,
 With brod bordes abouten, ybenched wel clene,
 With wyndoves of glass, wrought as a chirche.
 Then walkede I ferrer, and went all abouten,
 And seigh halles full heigh, and houses full noble,
 Chambers with chymneys, and chapels gaye.
 And kychenes for an high kynge, in castels to holden,
 And her dortoure¹ ydight, with dores full stronge,
 Fermerye² and fraitur with fele mo houses,
 And al strong ston wal sterne upon heithe
 With gaye garites and grete, and iche hole glased.”

Yorkshire, or rather Northumbria, is said to have been thickly strewn with monasteries in the early days of St. Cuthbert, the missionary of the seventh century. We may certainly trace in various writers the names of something like a dozen, of which no other remains are to be found. Most of these, however, seem, like the original foundation of St. Hild at Whitby, to have belonged to an earlier and less perfect system than the Benedictine. It was the bishops and monks of Scotland who, after the conversion of the Saxons, did for Northumbria what St. Augustine had done for Kent; and Burton (*Monast. Ebor.*) mentions that ten monasteries were founded

¹ “Dorter,” or dormitory.

² “Farmery,” or infirmary.

PLAN OF THE BENEDICTINE
ABBEY OF WESTMINSTER



by them in Yorkshire before the Danish invasion of 832. Of these, Lastingham, founded in 648, and Whitby, about eleven years later, were the first. The early foundations were troubled now by the attacks of the Danes, and now by the support given by Saxon kings to the secular party in the Church. While the prayer for deliverance "a furore Northmannorum" is yet upon the lips of the monks, comes the rough hand of an Eadwig to disturb them. For, as William of Malmesbury records, "et Malmesburiense cœnobium, plusquam ducentis septuaginta annis a monachis inhabitatum, *clericorum stabulum* fecit."¹

But the Danes, after all, were their worst enemies. Burton tells us² that after the devastation of Northumbria by Inguar and Hubba—a hundred years before Eadwig, by the bye—"there were few remains of monasteries left, and those generally were possessed by married clergy—*clericorum stabula!*" And another old authority goes so far as to say that "Christianity was almost extinct, very few churches (and those only built with hurdles and straw) were rebuilt. But no monasteries were refounded for almost two hundred years. The country people never

¹ "He made the monastery of Malmesbury, which had been occupied by monks for more than 270 years, into a *stable of secular clergy.*"—See Preface to Sir Henry Taylor's *Edwin the Fair*.

² *Monast. Ebor.*

heard of the name of a monk, and were frightened at the very habit." But if monasticism seemed to be rooted out of Northumbria, this was by no means the case in other parts of England. Dunstan gave it new life and reality at Glastonbury, and introduced, in fact, the Benedictine system with something of Cluniac strictness. At last, in 1073, there came from Evesham three missionary monks, and guided, as they believed, by a divine impulse, established themselves on the Tyne, where the memory of the Venerable Bede still clung about the ruins of Jarrow. From thence after a time, they went their ways, Aldwin to Durham; Remefried (or Reinfred) to Streaneschalch, the modern Whitby; and Elfwin to York, to restore a monastery dedicated to the Blessed Virgin.

It is remarkable, however, that Stephen, the first Abbot of St. Mary's, who has left us a very circumstantial account of the foundation, makes no mention at all of Elfwin or of any earlier building, except the Church of St. Olave's. He simply relates how, being harassed at Whitby by pirates on the one hand, and the caprice of William de Perci on the other, he moved first to Lastingham and then to York, where Alan, Earl of Richmond, gave him and his monks the Church of St. Olave's and four acres of ground.



ST. MARY'S, YORK

St. Olaf, the martyred king of the Northumbrians, had, as Mr. Freeman¹ points out, become, by the middle of the eleventh century, “a favourite object of reverence, especially among men of Scandinavian descent. In his honour Earl Siward had reared a church in a suburb of his capital, called ‘Galmanho’ —a church which, after the Norman Conquest, grew into that great Abbey of St. Mary whose ruins form the most truly beautiful ornament of the northern metropolis.” “In his own church of Galmanho Siward the Strong, the true relic of old Scandinavian times, was buried with all honour.” Sometimes we find the monastery of St. Mary called “Galmanho;” and Leland tells us it was built outside the walls of York at or near the place where the dirt of the city was deposited and criminals executed. In explanation of the name it has been suggested that “galman” is derived from Saxon “galga”—a gallows.²

The first great event in the history of St. Mary's was the secession of thirteen monks, who desired to adopt the Cistercian reform of the Benedictine rule. Of this we shall have more to say in another place.

¹ Freeman's *Norman Conquest*, 3rd edition, vol. ii. p. 374, and vol. iv. p. 666; and cf. Cott. Tiber, B. i. (“Abingdon Chronicle”) and Cott. Tiber, B. iv. (“Worcester Chronicle”).

² See a paper by Mr. Well-beloved in the fifth volume of the *Vetusta Monumenta* of the Society of Antiquaries.

In the time of Abbot Severinus, the second quarter of the twelfth century, St. Mary's is said to have been burnt ; but it seems unlikely that it should have been left in ruins till 1258, when, under Abbot Simon de Warwick, we have the first indications of a renewal of building operations.

The monastery, meanwhile, had been much troubled by the machinations of one Thomas de Warthill, who, wishing to get possession of a slice of the abbey lands, brought a false accusation against the Abbot and his house respecting a certain charter, and induced the king to fine them heavily. The monks were dispersed, and the "church and offices exposed to great danger and ruin." But with Simon de Warwick good times returned, while a just heaven "monoculaverat" the offending Warthill, of whom it is said that "a monachis Sanctæ Mariæ Eboraci cœnobialis siccis oculis meruit deplorari"—"from the monks of St. Mary he deserved a dry-eyed lamentation." The Abbey of St. Mary's had diverse immunities and privileges which seem to have roused the jealousy and wrath of the citizens of York. Frequent collisions, of the nature apparently of aggravated "town and gown rows," occurred ; and the citizens having lately destroyed the earthen rampart by which the precinct was guarded, it was one of the glories of

Abbot Simon to build the stone wall and towers, the remains of which are still to be seen. Yet even he was obliged to absent himself from York for a whole year, on an occasion described by Leland, when "in the year 1262 an attack was made by the citizens of York on the Monastery of St. Mary, which resulted in much loss of life and injury to property." At this time Simon also paid £100 to the citizens as a peace-offering.

Selby, York, and Fountains were, as has been said, the only mitred abbeys in the county ; and when we find that at the dissolution there were fifty monks in the latter, we may perhaps accept the computation that in an establishment of so much dignity and importance there would not be less than one hundred and fifty servants.¹

The revenue has been variously stated at £1550 and £2085 a year. It is certain that the Abbot of St. Mary's had two country seats near York, and a house in London not far from Paul's Wharf, where he lived while attending in his place in Parliament.

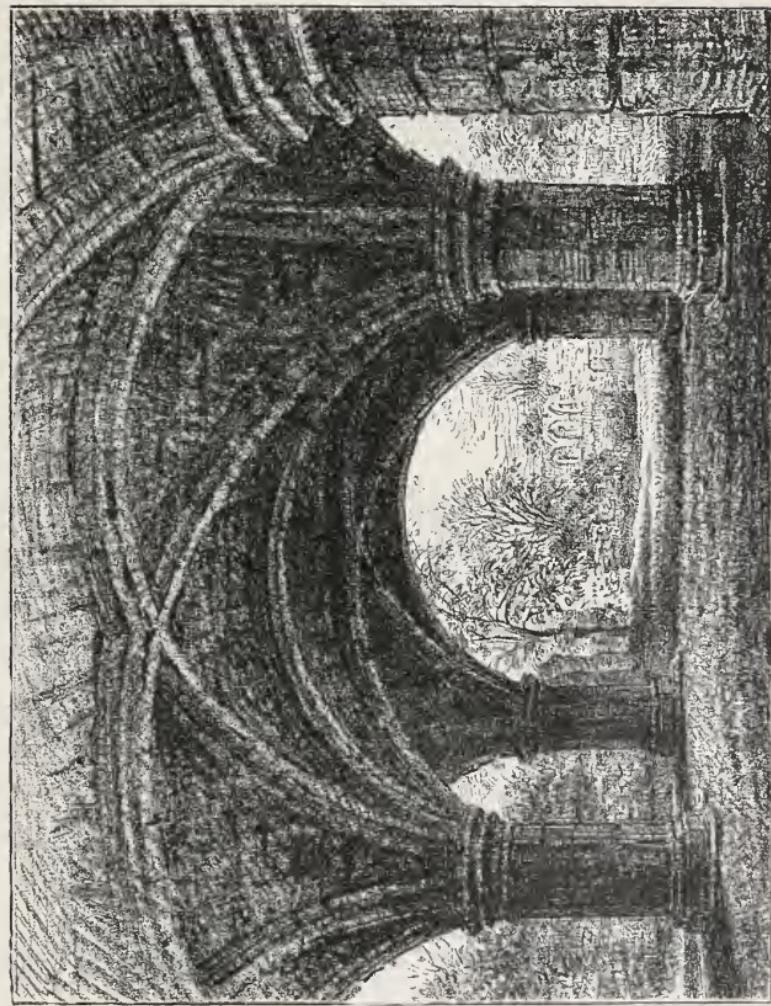
The Close of St. Mary's, commonly called St. Mary's Shore, contained fifteen acres. On the outskirts of a city like York this was doubtless, even

¹ Pugin (*Gothic Arch.*) mentions that the household of the Abbot of Glastonbury numbered three hundred, and sometimes as many as five hundred guests were entertained.

then, a considerable extent, but we shall find at Fountains a precinct six times as large, while Jervaulx reached one hundred acres. The Abbots of St. Mary's owned a second enclosure on the other side of "Marygate," where the name of "Almonry Garth"¹ still lingers, and the traces of the Abbot's fish-ponds may be seen.

Though this monastery did not pass at the dissolution into private hands, but was retained by the Crown, it has suffered from the erection on a part of its site of a palace for the lords president of the north ; and the royal grants of stone from the ruins for building the county gaol in 1701, and repairing St. Olave's Church and Beverley Minster in 1705 and 1717 respectively, have left little or nothing but the nave of the church and the vestibule of the chapter-house. The former ranks with Tintern as an example of the last stage of the transition from Early English to Decorated ; the latter, with Byland, as a fine specimen of "that early variety of the Early Pointed (or Early English) of which the characteristic is the square abacus." Sir Gilbert Scott, in his lectures on Mediaeval Architecture, from which I quote these

¹ It should be remembered that the almonry of a Benedictine monastery was often much more than an office for doling out alms to beggars. There were permanent almshouses and also schools or "homes" for children.



AMBULATORY OF ST. LEONARD'S HOSPITAL AND ROMAN MULTANGULAR TOWER, YORK

last words, refers several times to this vestibule, always in terms of the highest praise, and gives "restored views" from two positions.¹

The eight north windows of the nave of St. Mary's are among the chief glories of English Gothic. They exhibit a remarkable alternation of two designs, viz. first a single mullion dividing two trefoil-headed lights, with a sexfoil in the head of the arch, and then three trefoil-headed lights divided by two mullions and surmounted by three quatrefoils. Of these eight windows, the three nearest the transept are distinguished by filleted mouldings. The gardens of the Yorkshire Philosophical Society enclose, besides the nave and chapter-house of St. Mary's, two remarkable ruins, which help to redeem the commonplace trimness of the scene. These are the celebrated Roman "multangular tower," and some fragments of the Hospital of St. Leonard. The latter includes a thirteenth-century chapel of great beauty, which is almost certainly the work of John Romanus, the treasurer of the Minster and builder of its northern transept. It is difficult now to picture what must have been the general effect of this chapel, with its adjoining dorter, and many-aisled substructure of

¹ A fragment of a palace built by Archbishop Rogers (1154 to 1181) on the north side of the Minster should be compared.

cloister or ambulatory.¹ The present picturesque condition of the ruin is shown in the accompanying sketch.

For architects and antiquaries, even more than for artists, York is indeed a very paradise, and yet the wild cliff at Whitby, and the stillness of Byland, recall with stronger spell that Benedictine spirit which once swayed the Christian world.

¹ It is clear that, as in the normal Benedictine infirmary, the patients slept in a room directly communicating with their oratory. An analogous arrangement may be seen in Lord Beauchamp's Almshouse at Newland, near Malvern.

II

RIEVAULX

“IN the reign of Henry I. flourished St. Barnard, Abbot of Clareval, a man full of devotion, and chief of many monks, some of whom he sent into England about 1128, who were honourably received by both king and kingdom ; and particularly by Walter l’Espec, who, about 1131, allotted to some of them a solitary place in Blakemore, near Hamelac, now Helmesley, surrounded by steep hills and covered with wood and ling, near the angles of the three different vales, with each a rivulet running through them ; that passing by where the Abbey was built being called Rie, whence this vale took its name, and that religious house was thence called Rie-val.” A great name and a great event are these which the author of the Yorkshire “Monasticon” recounts so quietly—St. Bernard of Clairvaux and the coming of the Cistercians. The name at least our readers know.

"There have been other men," says the Archbishop of Dublin, "Augustine and Luther for instance, who by their words and writings have ploughed deeper and more lasting furrows in the great field of the Church, but probably no man during his lifetime ever exercised a *personal* influence in Christendom equal to his: who was the stayer of popular commotions, the queller of heresies, the umpire between princes and kings, the counsellor of popes, the founder—for so he may be esteemed—of an important religious order, the author of a crusade."

And Mr. Freeman (*Norman Conquest*, v. 231) calls him "the holy Bernard, the last of the Fathers, the counsellor of popes and kings." The event, it is perhaps just possible, they never heard of. The Cistercians were a strict order of reformed Benedictines. If we had never travelled in Yorkshire we might be inclined to dismiss them with the remark that they allowed no lofty towers to their churches and no grease to their vegetables. But when one has seen Rievaulx and Byland, Fountains and Kirkstall, Jervaulx and Roche, one begins to suspect there is more to be said.

Our next half-dozen papers will be concerned with the work of these Cistercians, and we can hardly fail to gather, as we go, some knowledge of the men; it will be well, therefore, in this place briefly to explain their origin.

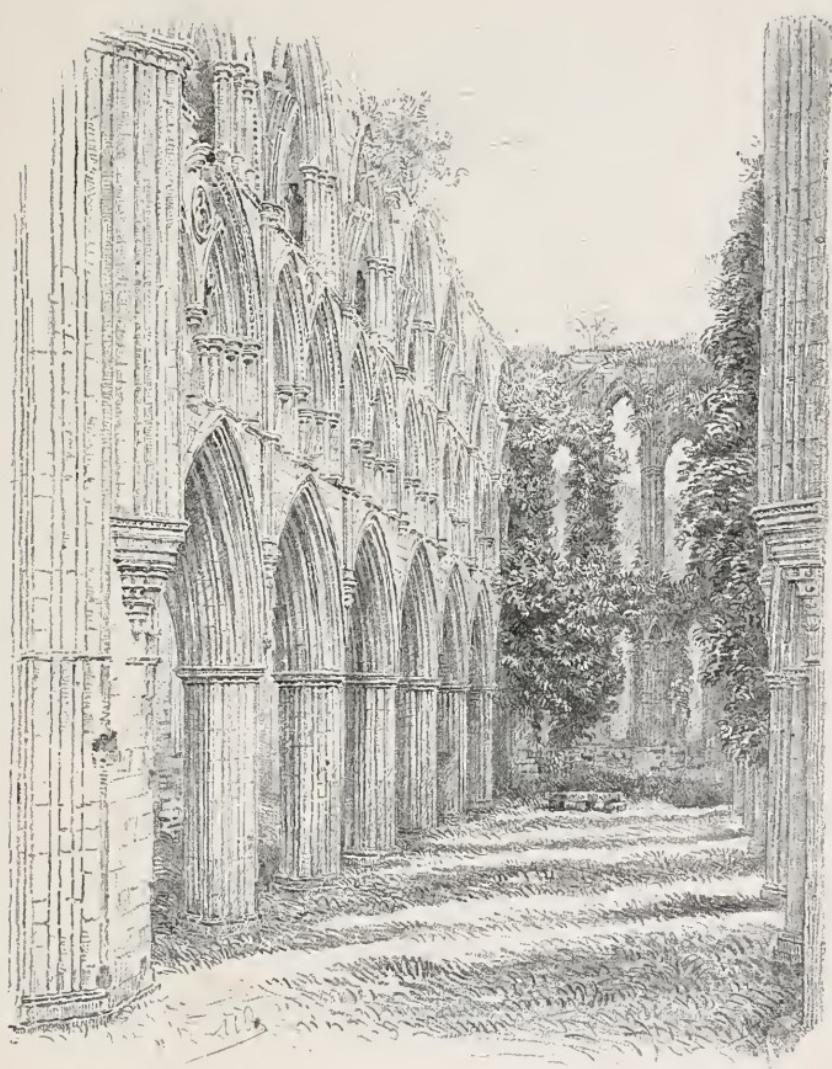
Towards the close of the eleventh century one

Robert was Abbot of Molesme, in Burgundy. The monks of Molesme, like many other Benedictines of their day, were lax in their discipline; and Robert, after trying in vain to revive among them in its literal strictness the rule of their founder, retired with a small following to Citeaux—then a wilderness of thorns. Here he founded a monastery in which were contained the germs of the great Cistercian order. Already the English Stephen Harding¹ was there—the future framer of the Cistercian system, and the destined master and instructor of that very “Barnard, Abbot of Clareval,” whose brilliant and winning personal qualities were to be the special means of its diffusion. Hugh, Archbishop of Lyons and papal legate, sanctioned the movement in a letter which has been preserved. He solemnly notifies that Robert and certain of his sons—brethren of the monastery (*cenobium*) of Molesme—had come before him and declared themselves anxious to keep more closely and perfectly the rule of the most blessed Benedict, which they had held in lukewarm and careless fashion; that, for many reasons, this was not possible without their removal, and that he, studying the welfare of both parties, advised the departure of the reformers to such new dwelling as the heavenly

¹ “Harding,” says Mr. Freeman, “was doubtless his baptismal name, and Stephen the name which he took on entering religion.”

bounty should provide, and bade them persevere in their intention. In St. Stephen Harding we recognise, after five hundred years, something of St. Benedict's knowledge of men and power of organisation. But the latter, as has been truly said, "organised for a monastery," the former "for an order." In the ideal of St. Benedict each monastery was a kingdom under its Abbot. It is true the bishops were recognised as official visitors, but their jurisdiction was wholly inadequate to correct abuses or maintain discipline. And so it came to pass that in some monasteries "lay abbots might be found quietly established with their wives and children," and "the tramp of soldiers, the neighing of horses, and baying of hounds, made the cloister more like a knight's castle than a place dedicated to God's service."¹ The attempt of St. Odo of Cluny to remedy this state of things was doomed to ultimate failure, because he still left everything dependent on the individual Abbots. Stephen's idea was to create an order which should be self-regulating and self-reforming. With this view he instituted a system of reciprocal visitation among the Cistercian houses and subordinated them all to the parent house of Citeaux. Here every year, on Holy Cross Day (14th September), a general chapter was to be held

¹ *The Cistercian Saint of England*, edited by J. H. N.



RIEVAULX ABBEY
THE CHOIR AND PRESBYTERY, LOOKING SOUTH

D

under the presidency of the “Pater Universalis Ordinis”—the Abbot of Citeaux.

The uniformity which enables us, in passing from one Cistercian ruin to another, to predict with certainty what buildings we shall find or trace, and where, is one of the results of that body of statutes, the “Carta Caritatis,” as it was called, which Stephen Harding, the Englishman, presented to his assembled abbots in 1119. And to this uniformity is attributed, with much probability, the remarkably rapid spread of the pointed arch after its first appearance in England. Two other peculiarities, the one a characteristic quality, the other a noticeable feature, of Cistercian architecture, owe their origin and significance to the founders of the order.

The first is their simplicity. All *original* Cistercian work is plain and good. A severe self-restraint everywhere forces the loving ardour of these wifeless and childless builders to flow in narrow channels. The zeal of the sacred house is eating them up, but they have to hold their eager hands from lofty tower and lavish decoration, and spend themselves upon the perfect utterance of lowly thoughts.

Robert, Alberic, Stephen, and Bernard were monastic Puritans. Not only were their churches and the dresses and diet of their monks plain and

humble, but their very eucharistic vessels and priestly vestments were rigidly reformed. The typical Cistercian presbytery was without aisles, though the usual chapels east of the transepts were permitted and adopted. In the domestic arrangements the same simplicity prevailed. In place of the lordly dwelling of the Benedictine abbot, the Cistercian had probably but a single private room, and a bed in the common dormitory of the monks.

The Benedictines, whose original garb had been simply the usual clothing of the peasants, had learnt to be curious in party-coloured silks, in which they paraded upon costly mules ; but the "white monk," rejecting all raiment not prescribed by St. Benedict, confined his wardrobe to the tunic, the scanty sleeveless scapular, and the pointed cowl. When he was "in choir" it is true he threw a cuculla, or large mantle, over his working dress, and when, in permitted boots and spurs he rode abroad, this garment would be black or gray. The second note of a Cistercian house to which we have referred—the accommodation provided for the *conversi* or lay brethren—is so much more conspicuous at Fountains than at Rievaulx that its explanation will be best and most intelligibly given when the former is under discussion.

Rievaulx, founded in 1131, was the first Cistercian



RIEVAULX ABBEY
THE PRESBYTERY AND CHOIR, LOOKING NORTH

house in Yorkshire, and its abbot was head of the order in England.

Walter l'Espe, the brave soldier and skilful leader, who fought in the Battle of the Standard, and founded the castle of Helmsley, was also the founder of three abbeys. These were Kirkham (on the Derwent), Wardon in Bedfordshire, and Rievaulx on the Rie.

“An old man and full of days, quick-witted, prudent in counsel, moderate in peace, circumspect in war, a true friend, and a loyal subject. His stature was passing tall, his limbs all of such size as not to exceed their just proportions, and yet to be well matched with his great height. His hair was still black, his beard long and flowing, his forehead wide and noble, his eyes large and bright, his face broad but well-featured, his voice like the sound of a trumpet, setting off his natural eloquence of speech with a certain majesty of sound.”

Such is the portrait left to us by Aelred, Abbot of Rievaulx, of Walter l'Espe, its founder. Such was the man who eventually became a monk in his own abbey.

St. Bernard himself, having left Citeaux to rule his monastery of Clairvaux, sent from thence a body of monks to that Northumbrian land which has been well called “the true English home of the Cistercian order.” To his friend, Archbishop Thurstan of York, he commended the mission, and by Thurstan’s

advice L'Espec settled them on the banks of the Rie. As we look down from Lord Feversham's broad gallery of turf upon the roofs of the quiet village and the roofless walls of the Abbey, it is difficult to realise the wild thicket—the *locus vastæ solitudinis et horroris*, where William and Waltheof, both personal friends of St. Bernard—prayed and fasted and built. But Rievaulx was, indeed, the ideal site for a Cistercian house. To be near a town was forbidden, and would have been alien to the Cistercian spirit.¹

“The fragrant clouds of dewy steam
By which deep drove and tangled stream
Pay for soft rains, in season given,
Their tribute to the genial heaven”—

were everywhere the chosen portion of these silent workers. There, as beneath the dark yews by the Skell, or the grim rock near Maltby, they “wrought in a sad sincerity,” and, in accordance with their rule, dedicated their work to “St. Mary, the Queen of Heaven and Earth.” Beautiful, indeed, in its decay is the Abbey which now nestles in the heart of the valley. The church, like the wooded hills and

¹ “In civitatibus in castellis aut villis, nulla nostra construenda sunt cœnobia, sed in locis a conversatione hominum semotis.”—Instituta Capit. Gen. Ordinis Cisterc. A.D. 1134. Quoted by E. Sharpe, Part I. of his *Ci t. Architecture*. Cf. also

“Oppida Franciscus—magnas Ignatius urbes,
Bernardus valles—montes Benedictus amabat.”



HELMSEY CASTLE

distant purple moor, seems to have been always there.

“O'er England's abbeys bends the sky,
As on its friends with kindred eye ;
For out of thought's interior sphere
These wonders rose to upper air,
And Nature gladly gave them place,
Adopted them into her race,
And granted them an equal date
With Andes and with Ararat.”

And yet this is not, after all, the church of Walter l'Espec and of William and Waltheof. If we look closer we shall see that there is more ornament than is consistent with Cistercian simplicity. This noble triforium, so like the work of the unreformed Benedictines at Whitby, these stately aisles—it is admirable, but it is hardly what we expected. The explanation is not far to seek. The church has obviously been altered and enlarged within the period of the first pointed style. On this, and the farther fact that its “orientation” is almost north and south instead of east and west, a wild theory was long ago set up that “the body of the old church was made to serve as the transept of the new.” It is hardly necessary to say that the arrangement of the cloister and conventional buildings would alone make such a change of plan practically impossible.

The ritual and architectural east end must always have been, as now, at the south, and the *western* entrance at the north end of the nave. It is perfectly true that the transept contains all the original round arched work of L'Espec which now remains above ground, but there is no reason for supposing that the nave either required or received any subsequent addition. It was by no means uncommon for the ritual choir to extend over the transept opening and several bays of the architectural nave, and this was, in all probability, the case at Rievaulx.

The normal eastern arm of Cistercian churches was originally short, "the choir being placed in and west of the crossing."¹ Rievaulx has been altered and enlarged, but it has not been turned round. Its architectural choir, or eastern limb, probably owes its extent and beauty to the emulation excited in the minds of the monks by the ambitious and successful work of their neighbours of Byland. At one time it seemed as if the wanderings of that Ulysses of abbeys were to end on the banks of the Rie at a point nearly opposite Rievaulx ; and though the disturbing influence of the bells of Byland ceased with its re-

¹ See an admirable paper on "The Cistercian Plan" by Mr. J. T. Micklethwaite, F.S.A., in the *Journal of the Yorkshire Archaeological and Topographical Association* for December 1881.



RIEVAULX ABBEY. THE TRANSEPT

moval to its next resting-place, an eager rivalry in building and adornment remained to testify to the historical fact of its former proximity. It has been truly said that "the Cistercian Abbeys in Yorkshire, which are the earliest pure Gothic works in this country, seem to have been the works of the monks themselves."¹ This fact, which has a special bearing upon our present subject, is, for many reasons, well worth remembering. In these abbeys design and execution were constantly and throughout personal, religious, monastic. Theirs is thus "a beauty wrought out from within." It has in it something of the nature of a growth, something of the mysterious charm and unappraisable value of a spontaneous development.

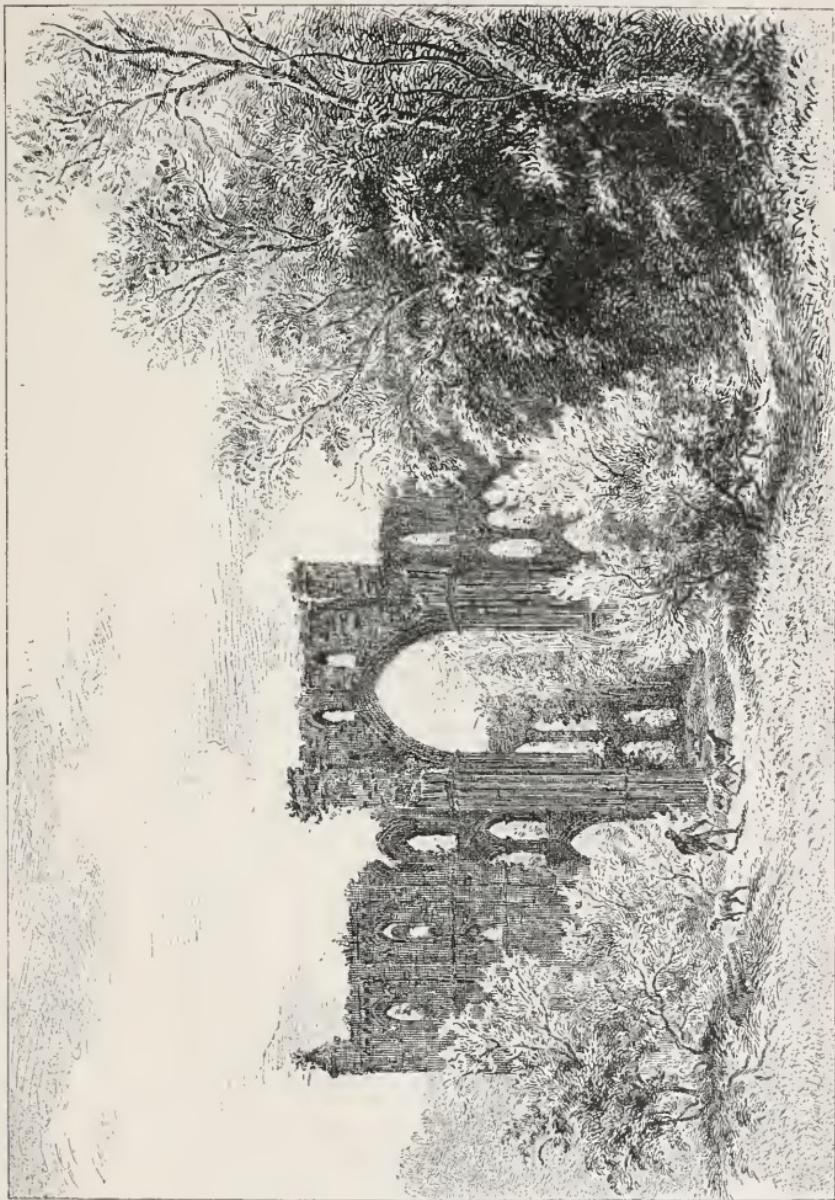
"Know'st thou what wove yon woodbird's nest
Of leaves and feathers from her breast ?
Or how the fish outbuilt her shell,
Painting with morn each annual cell ?
Or how the sacred pine-tree adds
To her old leaves now myriads ?
Such and so grew these holy piles
Whilst love and terror laid the tiles."

But to "love and terror" at Rievaulx was added the less solemn but scarcely less potent motive of emulation. For what do we find there, and what are the facts? We find a ruined church consisting entirely of an eastern arm and transepts. Where the

¹ Stevenson's *House Architecture*.

nave should be are grass-grown heaps which cry aloud, and not, it is hoped, in vain, for excavation. The lower part of the transept is clearly Norman, and so, it will probably be found, was the nave. These were part of the older and more truly Cistercian design. But the upper part of the transepts and the whole of the eastern arm are Early English. Some idea of what the old building must have been like may be gathered from the ruins of Kirkstall, where no eastward addition was ever made. The new work at Rievaulx extends to no less than seven bays of rather more than 20 feet each, while the whole church, including transept and nave as well as choir, was not less than 343 feet long. In a word, the Latin cross of the normal Cistercian ground-plan has been entirely lost sight of. No doubt the desire for refinements of ritual, which soon showed itself even among the Cistercians, predisposed the monk-builders to such architectural innovations. Probably, also, they were inspired by the fine proportions of the un-reformed Benedictine churches, and urged on by the masonic instinct and impulse. All these motives we shall see at work at Fountains, though with curiously different results. But we can hardly doubt that the temptation which first proved too strong for their traditions of Cistercian Puritanism was the desire to

RIEVAULX ABBEY



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equal or surpass the glorious work of their neighbours and rivals. The poor homeless and churchless wanderers who, some twelve years after the foundation of Rievaulx, had found a temporary resting-place at Old Byland, removed after four or five years to Stocking, and thence to the spot where the ruins of Byland Abbey are still visible. Even here they were only five or six miles from Rievaulx, and their noble church arose almost under the eyes of their old neighbours.

Now, Byland is 328 feet long, and the transepts, as well as the presbytery, are aisled. It was founded in 1177, and probably completed by the end of the twelfth century. Sometime in the first half of the thirteenth century—Mr. Edmund Sharpe thought not earlier than 1240—the new eastern arm at Rievaulx was completed. Longer than that of Byland, and equally guilty of aisles and a triforium, it is now the great architectural and artistic attraction of a ruin which is perhaps only second in beauty to that of Fountains.

Our illustrations show this building in various points of view, and recall the peculiar charm of its situation and surroundings—less trim and artificial than those at Studley, less striking, perhaps, than those of Bolton, but combining a foreground of wooded hill

with distant heights of russet and purple moor into a picture which need fear comparison with neither. Of the eastern arms of Rievaulx and Fountains it has been said that "it would be difficult to find two examples which more characteristically represent the purity and elegance of the best work of the English lancet period," though "the effect in both cases is due to richness and delicacy of moulded work and excellence of proportion in main features," for "of carved work there is little, and of sculpture none."

We have remarked that the triforium at Rievaulx bears a striking resemblance to that at Whitby. In the latter, however, a circular dripstone moulding surmounts each pair of pointed arches, whereas the former has nothing between the pointed arches and the string-course of the clerestory. A special characteristic of Rievaulx is the arrangement of lancets in couples, and this idea is carried out in the clerestory, whereas at Whitby we have groups of five, the centre only being pierced. The triforium at Whitby is also more lofty than that at Rievaulx, which again is not of the same design in the transept as in the eastern arm.

Of the domestic buildings, the most conspicuous and interesting is the frater. Its peculiarity in being

¹ *Architecture of the Cistercian*, Edmund Sharpe.

supported on a vaulted undercroft is perhaps due to the abrupt declivity of the ground,¹ but in connection with this undercroft a question arises which is of considerable interest to antiquaries. The pulpit from which one of the monks must always read to his brethren during dinner is approached, as usual, by a straight staircase inside the frater, but any one who will take the trouble to mount the broken and ivy-covered steps will find the remains of a second flight winding downwards and opening into the vault below. In this respect the arrangement at Rievaulx is believed to be unique in England, though Beaulieu in Hampshire has points of resemblance. "A dim light," says Mr. J. T. Micklethwaite, "is thrown on this curious arrangement by a direction in *Consuetudines Ecc. Off.* (cvi.) which orders that after the reader has ceased and put back his book into its place—*discedat ubi a conventu non videatur*—he should go away out of sight of the rest."

In accordance with the invariable Cistercian plan, the frater at Rievaulx is at right angles with the cloister, and not parallel, as was the Benedictine custom (see plan, p. 15). It has been suggested that this difference may be accounted for by the fact that

¹ The fact that Byland, with no great fall in the ground, had also an undercroft suggests that some other reason, possibly the fear of floods, gave rise to the arrangement.

the Cistercian monks were their own cooks, taking the duty week by week in turn. It was thus almost a necessity that the kitchen as well as buttery should have direct communication with the cloister—the ordinary living-room of the monks. On the other hand, it is to be remembered that the Cluniacs carried out a similar system in buildings of the older Benedictine type. In some respects the frater at Rievaulx is not unlike that at Fountains, but as it is not longitudinally divided by pillars, as is the case with the latter, it must have been covered by a wooden roof in one span.

Of the many thoughts and facts which crowd about the memory of Rievaulx Abbey, we must content ourselves with two of special interest. Here, in these blank and broken lancets, is said to have glowed in the twelfth century some of the earliest English stained glass; and hence, in the days of Ailred, went forth the colony which founded the first Cistercian Abbey in Scotland. To Walter l'Espe, as well as to King David, are art and poetry indebted for Melrose; and "when distant Tweed is heard to rave," as well as when the gentler murmur of the Rie is in our ears, we may recall the image of the "old man full of days, whose stature was passing tall and his voice like the sound of a trumpet."

III

BYLAND

ABOUT half-way on its northward course to Darlington, the York, Newcastle, and Berwick Railway passes within a mile of the market town of Thirsk.

It is a sufficiently picturesque little place on the banks of the Colbeck (or Caldbeck), a tributary of the Swale, but its attraction now consists chiefly in its convenient nearness to the Hambleton Hills and its fine perpendicular church.

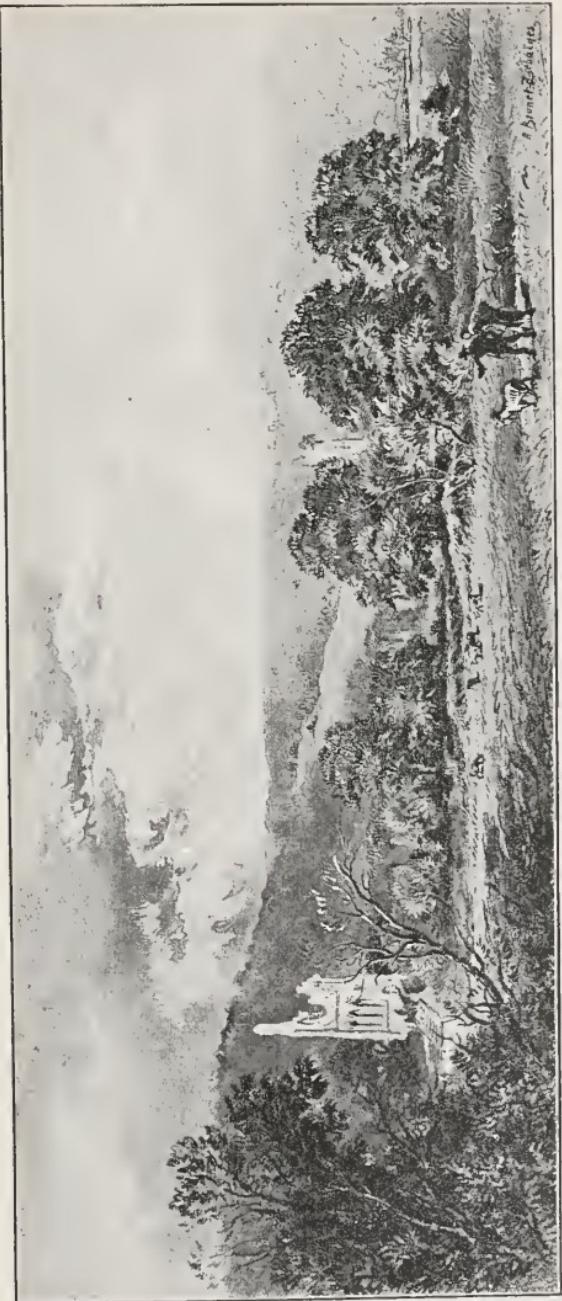
The traditions that this church was built with the ruins of the ancient castle of the Mowbrays, and that its carved oak altar came from Byland Abbey, are about equally improbable ; but the connection of Thirsk with the Mowbrays and of Byland Abbey with both are historical facts.

It was in the reign of Stephen, and probably the year of the Battle of the Standard, that a waggon drawn by eight slow-paced oxen lumbered and

creaked along the street of Thirsk. As in the familiar scene of Goethe's *Herman and Dorothea* the waggon conveyed the whole store and possessions of a party of outcast wanderers. But here the resemblance ceases. There were no women, no children, no relics of a home—indeed all things domestic were conspicuously absent. The party consisted of an abbot and twelve monks, the waggon was laden with books and scanty changes of raiment.

The seneschal of the Castle of "Thresk" took pity, so runs the story, on the weary travellers, and invited them within the gates. Now at this time Roger de Mowbray—the future Crusader and hero—was a minor under the guardianship of his mother, Gundreda. So the seneschal came to his lady and told her what he had done. "And when the said lady, in a certain upper chamber, had peeped secretly through a certain window and seen their poverty, for very piety and pity she melted into tears. Yet was she glad at their coming, and edified by their simple aspect and bearing, so she made them all stay with her and ministered to them abundantly in all things needful, forbidding them to depart."

From the chronicle of Philip, third Abbot of Byland, we learn that these monks went forth in



BYLAND ABBEY

1134 from Furness Abbey and settled, with one Gerald for their Abbot, at Calder. Here they stayed several years, and were about to begin building when they were driven out by an incursion of the Scots. They fled to Furness, but, finding the gates of the mother Abbey ruthlessly closed against them, determined to apply to Thurstan, Archbishop of York, of whose share in the founding of Fountains Abbey, some five years earlier, they had doubtless heard. To York accordingly they were now making the best of their way.

Gundreda and her son arranged at first that the monks should receive for their support a tithe of all things which came into the castle larder, but the practical drawbacks to this plan were soon found to be intolerable. George, the steward or head cook—or whatever may be the best equivalent of the original “dapifer”—became hopelessly confused between the tithe due to the monks and the claims of his master’s guests, and was often obliged, in sudden emergencies, to borrow the former’s share to supply the necessities of the latter. It became necessary to assign to Gerald and his fellows a more distinct and convenient revenue, and Roger de Mowbray, at his mother’s request, granted them his cow pasture at Cambe, with other lands; and eventually the Lady Gundreda gave

out of her own dower the Vill of Byland on the Moor, afterwards known as "Old Byland."

Though this estate contained, according to Domesday Book, about seven hundred acres, the actual site available for the monastic buildings was inconveniently small. So when Roger de Mowbray saw that "many had come together to serve God" in a place which for this reason, and also on account of its proximity to Rievaulx, was altogether unsuitable, he gave his favourites in 1147 "two carucates" of waste ground under the hill of Blackhow, near Coxwold. The name of the new site was Stocking, and here the monks remained thirty years and built themselves a small stone church and cloister.¹ At last, on the eve of the festival of All Saints, in the year 1177, the final move was made to the place which, in memory of their first settlement on the banks of the Rie, they called Bellalanda or Byland. The former, it may be remarked, is just one of those translations from workaday Saxon into devout dog-Latin in which the monks delighted.

From the date of this final settlement to that of the surrender of the Abbey in 1540 into the hands

¹ It is clear, however, that the monastery at Old Byland was not yet entirely deserted, for, as Walbran has pointed out, the monks who in 1150 went out to found Jervaulx Abbey proceeded from *Old Byland*, "*habitante Abbate Rogero cum suis monachis apud Stockyng.*"

of the King's agents, history has little to say of the monks of Byland. Roger de Mowbray, we know, like Walter l'Espe, became an inmate of the monastery he had founded, but whether or not he was buried in the chapter-house is a point on which the chroniclers are not of one mind.

"This Roger," says one, "having been signed with the Cross, went into the Holy Land, and was captured there in a great battle by the Saracens. He was redeemed by the Knights of the Temple, and, worn out with military service, he returned to England. On his journey he found a dragon fighting with a lion in a valley called Saranel, whereupon he slew the dragon and the lion followed him to England and to his Castle of Hood. After this he lived fifteen years and died in a good old age, and was buried at Byland under a certain arch in the south wall of the chapter-house."

"He died," says another, "in the Holy Land, and was buried in Syria."

Equally doubtful is another claim to historical interest which has been put forward on behalf of Byland. On the 14th of October 1322, the Scots under Douglas swept down from the moors, routed the English, took the Earl of Richmond prisoner, and would have captured King Edward himself if he had not hastily fled, under the guidance, it is said, of two monks, in the direction of York.

Was the King at Rievaulx, as the chronicler of Lanercost alleges, or in the middle of his dinner at

Byland, as Knighton circumstantially relates? A historian of the latter Abbey would say at once, and doubtless prove conclusively, that this interrupted meal at Byland was as clear as daylight or the virtues of Mary Queen of Scots, but the impartial critic must leave the public to judge between the conflicting authorities.

No one has yet challenged the claim of our monastery to have been, soon after its foundation, the penitentiary of that fierce old lion Wymund, the soldier-bishop of Man and the Isles.

"For some time," as has been quaintly said, "he successfully led his flock on marauding expeditions against the isles and coast of Scotland, and baffled all the efforts of David, King of that country, to take him. He was at length, however, defeated by a brother bishop, taken prisoner, and had his eyes put out."

I am not sure on what authority this last statement rests. It has been more generally believed that Wymund, whom King David had attempted to bribe to good behaviour by a grant of the lordship of Furness, made himself so hateful to his vassals that they seized him, put out his eyes, and sent him to end his days at Byland. It is admitted that this remarkable ecclesiastic began his career as a monk at Furness, and the story of his last gloomy years at Byland is vouched for by William of Newburgh, who

both saw him and heard his reiterated boast, that by God alone had he been defeated, and "if he had but so much as a sparrow's eye he would make his enemies repent."

Such, let it be remembered, were the men and manners with which medieval monasticism had to do.

But it is time to speak of the visible and tangible remains which have come down to us from these dim, remorseful days.

There is something very striking in the abrupt descent from the lonely plateau of moor south of Duncombe Park to the sequestered valley of Byland.

"Its little hoof-crossed becks and cottage doors ;
Tired grandames gazing o'er the shadowy sills,
And children basking by the streamlet's shores ;
And glass-green waters broad and full and still,
Rich with the twinklings of ten thousand leaves ;
And gray forsaken ruins, bare and chill."

But undoubtedly the most picturesque view of the Abbey is obtained from the low ground to the south, whence the broken outline of the ruin is seen against the leafy background of the rising hill.

Time and decay have treated Byland and its greater offspring of Jervaulx with a strange unconscious irony. As we approach the latter we see, indeed, huge and imposing masses of ruin, high moss-grown walls, pillars, and pointed window, but we

wonder, perhaps, what gives them so confused and disorganised an air, till it strikes us that the great central object, the beginning and end, the cause at once and crown of all, is missing, and we ask, "Where is the church?" The answer to that question belongs to another time and place; but at Byland, meanwhile, our eye rests indeed upon the ruins of a noble church, but seeks in vain for the domestic buildings of a monastery.

Grassy mounds and low-lying moss-grown stones are there, but the wise and fruitful zeal which has disclosed at Jervaulx the whole ground-plan of the missing building, has not yet explored the foundations which undoubtedly exist in the precinct of the older monastery.

As it is, however, the normal Cistercian plan may with tolerable certainty be traced, and even the singular and hitherto unexplained passage between the western cloister and the cellarum¹ can be identified and compared with the parallel instances at Kirkstall and Beaulieu.

The Abbey Church of St. Mary at Byland is a very noble and instructive example of the earliest

¹ The cellarum "is the long range of buildings extending from the church along the west side of the cloister and considerably beyond it." Of this cellarum, miscalled the "domus conversorum," it will be necessary to say more in a subsequent chapter.

English Gothic. From the point of view of scientific architecture its design is highly esteemed by specialists, and the intrinsic beauty of the ruins and of the majestic vision which they suggest appeals, in our day, to a much wider class.

In the first place, it is evident that this was the largest *original* Cistercian church in England.¹ Rievaulx, we have seen, eventually surpassed it, and so did Fountains, but they were not built at once and from one design, and before the extension of their choirs they were both shorter than Byland. This pre-eminence in size was attained without sacrificing the proportions of the Latin cross—the design so dear to the early Cistercian builders. The great length of the nave was the first conspicuous feature which contributed to this result, the second was still more noteworthy.

“Byland,” wrote Mr. Edmund Sharpe, “was the first and only church of the order in which the piers and arches of the ground story were carried round the whole structure.” In other words, whereas most Cistercian churches had north and south aisles to the nave, eastern aisles only to the transept, and originally no aisles at all to the presbytery, Byland had, as it were, a continuous aisle, running west as well as

¹ Its actual length, as mentioned above (p. 51), was 328 feet.

east of the transept, and east as well as north and south of the choir. This transverse eastern aisle may very probably have been intended, like the eastern chapel or transept at Fountains, to supply sites for additional altars. At the western end there was, as at Fountains and Rievaulx, a porch or galilee, and the corbels of the "lean-to" roof may still be seen. As late as 1426 one William Tirplady directed by his will that his remains should be buried "in the galilee of St. Mary's Abbey at Byland."¹ From the existing west end, north wall of nave, and portions of north transept and choir, we are to conjure up, then, a singularly perfect transitional and Early English abbey church of rather more elaborate design than the normal Cistercian type. For, besides the peculiarities already mentioned, there is a triforium at Byland, whereas other great churches of the same order, such as Kirkstall and Fountains, have no such feature. The arches of this triforium are pointed, and so, presumably, were those of the clerestory. The Abbey, in fact, is remarkable as the first Cistercian example of the use of the pointed arch for decorative as distinguished from constructive purposes. The lower windows were round, but the three

¹ *Vide* an Appendix in Walbran's *Fountains Abbey*, vol. ii. (Surtees Society).



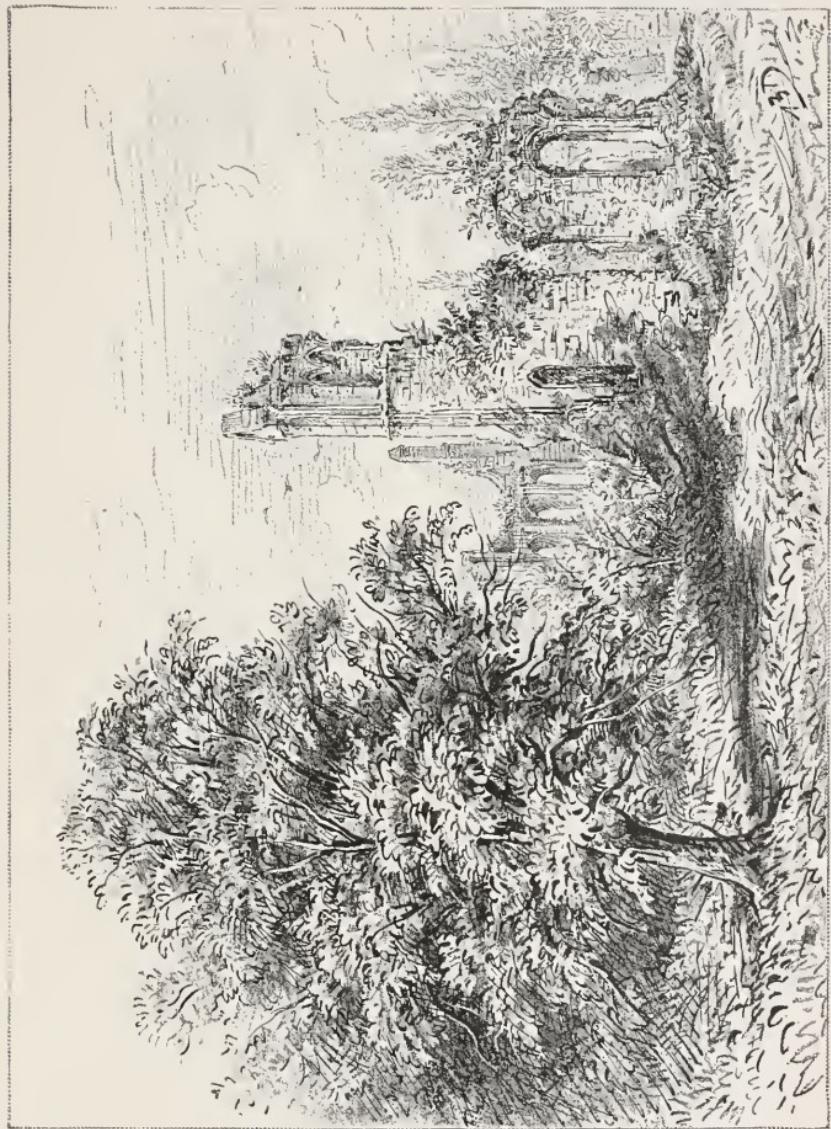
BYLAND ABBEY. WEST END

great lancets at the west are pointed, and, what is more remarkable, so are two of the three western doorways. Even in the choir, which may be supposed to have been built before the nave, we do not find, as from the analogy of Ripon we might have expected, any lingering preference for the round arch.

Now it has been pointed out by Mr. Micklethwaite that "the period during which the Cistercians were building their abbeys all over Europe was exactly that in which the Gothic style grew from its Romanesque infancy to the full manhood of the thirteenth century. It was the period during which men learned to value and use the pointed arch." And Mr. Sharpe has said that, dating the corruption and decadence of the Cistercian order from the end of the thirteenth century, there was a period of about 200 years during which 1200 Cistercian abbeys were founded, and he does not know one of these the general plan of which is not in accordance with that of all the rest, nor a single church which does not bear in its details the impress of its Cistercian origin. Some of these characteristics may have been, as he suggests, the result of rule, some of habit, but at least it is absolutely indispensable to any fruitful study of English monastic architecture that we should constantly remember the "vast and widespread organisation, with the great St.

Bernard for its leading spirit," in which those 1200 religious houses were linked and subordinated with almost feudal elaboration. Each house, like an ancient Greek colony, owed obedience to the parent home from which it had been sent forth, and at the head of all was Citeaux—the mother in whose memory every church of the order in all the world was "founded and dedicated in the name of the same saint, Mary the Queen of Heaven and Earth."

The history of Byland brings out this system with especial distinctness. Savigny, the parent house of Furness and Calder, adopted the rule of St. Bernard, or, more correctly speaking, of St. Stephen Harding, for itself and its dependencies. From that moment Byland was a Cistercian monastery. In 1142 our Abbot Gerald had attended a chapter at Savigny, and successfully claimed exemption from filial duty to Furness, which had been to him, as we have seen, so unnatural a parent. But, in 1150, the abbots of Calder and Furness again renewed their claim, and this time it was Aldred, Abbot of Rievaulx, who, by appointment of the Abbot of Savigny, acted as judge, and decided finally in favour of Byland. One result of this organisation, overriding as it did all distinctions of nation and tongue, was certainly to infuse into



BYLAND ABBEY. EAST END

English architecture a continental element. Mr. Street (in a paper in *The Church and the World*, first series) has not failed to notice the evidences of foreign influence in English monastic architecture. But, taking Fountains as his example, he has sought to explain this by the personal relations of its abbots with Clairvaux. He points out, for instance, that Murdac, Abbot of Fountains, was first a monk at Clairvaux, then Abbot of Vauclair, and was finally sent by St. Bernard to Fountains, while his successor had also been previously Abbot of Vauclair; and accordingly he says, "We see features of detail which would be perfectly consistent with the architecture which these abbots saw everywhere around them when they were at Clairvaux or Citeaux, but which were new and strange to English art." Mr. Street's opinion on the purely architectural point may, I suppose, be taken as conclusive; but if so, the fact thus established illustrates, not an accidental feature in the history of one abbey, but a chapter in the archæology of monasticism which inseparably links it with the study of English art.

The remaining features of special interest at Byland are—besides the size of its cloister court—the majestic proportions of its round-headed windows and its remarkable western façade. This part of

the church was certainly the last to be erected ; and it is even possible, as has been suggested by Mr. Walbran, that it formed no part of the original design. The centre includes a trefoiled door surmounted by three pointed windows, and above these again the remains of a large wheel window said to be twenty-six feet in diameter. The west door of the south aisle is round-arched, with plain capitals ; that of the north aisle pointed, with mouldings of the same date as those of the central entrance ; and it is noticeable that the capitals of the shafts of the latter are plain on the south side and sculptured on the north.

Within two miles of Byland is a scene which calls up memories and visions as alien from those of medieval monasticism as any that be conceived. In the pretty village of Coxwold are three cottages which occupy the site of Shandy Hall, where the *Sentimental Journey* was written and *Tristram Shandy* finished. Here, while a third century of neglect and decay was completing the desolate record of the failure of asceticism, Laurence Sterne was day by day sitting down "alone to venison, fish, and wild fowl, or a couple of fowls or ducks, with curds, strawberries and cream, and all the simple plenty which a rich valley under Hambledon Hills can produce,"

while "not a parishioner catches a hare or a rabbit, or a trout, but he brings it as an offering to me."¹

" See here, Sterne's roadside home. As day expires,
 Within that panneled room behold him sit,
 With long churchwarden pipe and scribbled quires,
 Himself scarce smiling at his light-born wit,
 Or, where the tears should flow, and cheek grow pale,
 Turning to shift his wig, or froth his ale."²

Compared with the *Canterbury Tales*, the *Sentimental Journey* may be called refined; but when Chaucer, turning from the portraiture of the dissolute monks, painted in simple words his ideal ecclesiastic, he soared into an atmosphere too pure for men like Sterne to breathe.

" A good man was ther of religioun,
 And was a poure Persoun of a toun ;
 But riche he was of holy thought and werk.

He cowde in litel thing han suffisaunce.
 Wyd was his parische, and houses fer asonder,
 But he ne lafte not for reyne ne thonder,
 In siknesse nor in meschief to visite
 The ferreste in his parrische, moche and lite,
 Uppon his feet, and in his hond a staf.

¹ As regards asceticism, at least, Sterne faithfully practised what he preached, for, in a sermon on Eccles. vii. 2, 3, we find him saying, "'Sorrow is better than laughter'—for a crack-brained order of Carthusian monks, I grant, but not for *men of the world*."

² Lines on "Coxwold near Thirsk," from *In Doors and Out*, by E. Wordsworth.

This noble ensample to his scheep he yof
That first he wroughte, and afterward he taughte."

It is true that Chaucer had been in Italy, and his mind and art were tinged with the morning light of the Renaissance, but he was still centuries behind that blessed day, so enlightened at once and so picturesque, in which Gothic architecture was consigned to the same limbo with monasticism, and "Mr. Spectator" himself sought, in the following words, to educate the national taste :

"Let any one reflect on the disposition of mind he finds in himself at his first entrance into the Pantheon at Rome, and how the imagination is filled with something great and amazing ; and at the same time consider how little, in proportion, he is affected with the inside of a Gothic cathedral, though it be five times larger than the other ; which can arise from nothing else but the greatness of the manner in the one, and the meanness in the other."¹

¹ *Spectator*, vol. vi. No. 415.

IV

FOUNTAINS

"WE have not lost all while we have the buildings of our forefathers." With some such thought as this in our minds we come to Fountains Abbey, the crown and glory of all that monasticism has left to us in England. The tiny seed from which, century after century, this inimitable beauty grew to perfection, was the same holy discontent, the same "incurable distaste for all that is not God," in which we have traced at Molesme the germ of the Cistercian order. From the cry which arose among a few monks at York, for a more faithful observance of the Benedictine rule, to the moment when the scaffolding was removed from the great Tudor tower of Fountains, this aspiration was working out its record.

But as with Italian art, so was it with monastic architecture—while the language became more ex-

quisite the message was forgotten, and when the form reached perfection the spirit fled for ever.

Slowly, but surely, as the wilderness became a garden and isolation gave place to fame, the Cistercian discontent was transformed into complacency ; and when the abbot and his monks beheld with satisfaction their completed work, the feet of those who should drive them out were already at the door. And now the jovial holiday-makers from Harrogate and the cultivated strangers from London or New York come and go with other words on their lips than “The pity of it, Iago ! O Iago, the pity of it !” for they are too busy to learn, or too thoughtless to remember, that nothing comes of nothing, and

“ Not from a vain or shallow thought
His awful Jove young Phidias brought,
Never from lips of cunning fell
The thrilling Delphic oracle ;
Out from the heart of Nature rolled
The burdens of the Bible old ;
The litanies of nations came,
Like the volcano’s tongue of flame,
Up from the burning core below,—
The canticles of love and woe.
The hand that rounded Peter’s dome
And groined the aisles of Christian Rome
Wrought in a sad sincerity :
Himself from God he could not free,
He builded better than he knew
The conscious stone to beauty grew.”

Yet in this fact—for fact it is none the less for being poetry—lies the real charm and wonder of Fountains Abbey. “Could any men whatever, did they but will it, build what our forefathers built? Is a cathedral the offspring of a random thought?” Here is the idea of Mr. Emerson’s verse expressed in Cardinal Newman’s prose.

The classical gardens and temples at Studley are admirable in their way, but the best that their self-conscious art can do is to emphasise by sharp and sudden contrast the awful sincerity of the Gothic church.

To describe at length this best-known of all the Yorkshire abbeys, would be to follow in the steps of quite a little army of writers, of whom one, the late Mr. Walbran, has treated the subject more or less exhaustively in three distinct works.¹ The near neighbourhood of Ripon, with its interesting cathedral, and of Harrogate, with its less pensive but apparently not less potent charm, make Fountains an easy and familiar goal for tourists, picnickers, lovers, and idlers. Nature and the monks have indeed done

¹ On the other hand, so much still remains to be elucidated that—pending the promised publication of the results of recent investigation by the secretary of the Society of Antiquaries and Mr. Micklēthwaite—even so slight a sketch as this must be given with caution and reserve.

much for the scene, and the Aislabies and the landscape-gardening of the eighteenth century have failed to spoil it. In fact, they have, as has been said, produced a contrast which is very impressive. The situation of Fountains Abbey at once challenges comparison with that of Bolton—a narrow valley, a winding stream, and wooded banks are the natural elements in both. But the Wharfe is essentially a more picturesque stream than the Skell, and the winding walks and simple rustic benches of the Duke of Devonshire's grounds are certainly in better taste than Anne Boleyn's Seat, the moon and crescent Ponds, and the Temples of Piety and Fame. At Fountains we hasten through carefully-planted groves, by glades, lakes, terraces, and statues, till a turn in the valley and a cutting in the trees reveal to us in startling perfection a ruin, of dates and styles varying from the first half of the twelfth century to the first half of the sixteenth. Whatever disappointment we may feel in the opening of the valley is forgotten in the beauty that haunts its deep recess. At Bolton all is reversed. The ruin comes first, and probably disappoints us, but we soon feel the enchantment of the rocky banks and the unfathomed Strid; and at last the distant view of Barden Tower, among the trees, completes the spell.

To those who do not care for Gothic architecture Fountains must remain a picturesque group of ruins in a fine situation, and nothing more. That is a matter of taste. But to say that an abbey is beautiful and impressive, and that, after all, it is the outcome of deliberate imposture and conscious hypocrisy, is to contradict all history and all philosophy. The lies that have obtained a hearing in the world have left no such record as this. Error there doubtless was, but it was the error of the higher and more spiritual natures ; it was error such as that into which Christian fell in his journey towards the Heavenly City, and from which his friends and neighbours at home enjoyed an ignoble immunity. Superstition, too, was close at hand, but it was the superstition that haunts the strongest faith, as the shadow haunts the substance, rather than that which as surely dogs the steps of unbelief.

Happily it is as unnecessary, as in these pages it would be inopportune, to discuss at length the theological, ethical, and philosophical aspects of monasticism. But there can be no fruitful study of art—still less of an avowedly religious art—without some attempt to look below the surface. Painting, indeed, and sculpture, and, in a greater degree, literature, have their growth in history and their

roots in philosophy, but the most historic of all arts is architecture, and the slow upraising of a great building reveals to us the action of time and circumstance upon creative thought.

The history of Fountains Abbey opens with a strange chapter of conflict and disunion.

There is a sense in which every Christian church is a temple of concord; for the central fact of Christianity is an atonement, and its central doctrine a reconciliation. And yet we are reminded again and again that its Founder came not to bring peace, but a sword.

Reconciliation, in fact, is not toleration, and atonement is not compromise.

The blackness of evil and the wickedness of the enemy were felt in the twelfth century as we hardly feel them in these gentler days. The need and desire to come out of the brutal and degraded world and be separate was real then, but with us heaven and saintliness are apt to be secretly regarded as Quixotic excesses bordering on fanaticism, while the goal of human progress in morals is placed somewhere nearer the "mean" of respectability. The wholesome and manly powers of hatred and contempt for what is base and bad are blunted in us, and in our bondage to the "common," which we mistake for freedom, we

are not unlike those old Bohemian heretics who spoke of the Prince of Darkness as “he who has been wronged.” Not so the founders of this Abbey.

Some time in the second quarter of the thirteenth century, at the request of John, Abbot of Fountains, Hugh, a monk of Kirkstall, wrote, from the dictation of the venerable Serlo, a narrative of the founding and early fortunes of Fountains. The buildings are thus not left to speak for themselves ; and if we miss the dreamy luxury of a solemn music without words, we gain a precise and detailed account which throws light upon the whole subject of English monasticism.

The story transports us at once to the subject of our first chapter—the Benedictine Monastery of St. Mary at York.

It is early in the twelfth century and scarcely fifty years since the great revival of monasticism in the north. Alas for the good Elfwin of Evesham ! already his work is perishing, already the new life, with its burning lamp and girded loins, is sinking into lethargic fatness and dim contentment.

But the life-work of men like Elfwin does not wholly perish. There is yet hope of St. Mary’s, for side by side with degeneracy there is discontent. In the fast-drying Benedictine soil there is a root which already thirsts for the waters-prings. “There are

those," says the chronicle, "whom God has chosen to himself for a seed." Richard, the sacrist of St. Mary's, and Ralph, Gamel, Gregory, Hamo, Thomas, and Waltheof, were men of troublesome and punctilious conscience. Like Luther, they felt imperfection as less sensitive men feel positive sin. "They are ashamed to settle down on the hither side of perfection, to have tarried so long in the borders of Moab and put up with an heritage beyond Jordan. They are weary of the turmoil of the world and the din of cities; their whole heart pants for the desert, for manual labour, and prophet's fare." In vain they try to conceal their searchings of heart from the prior—he knows and shares them all.

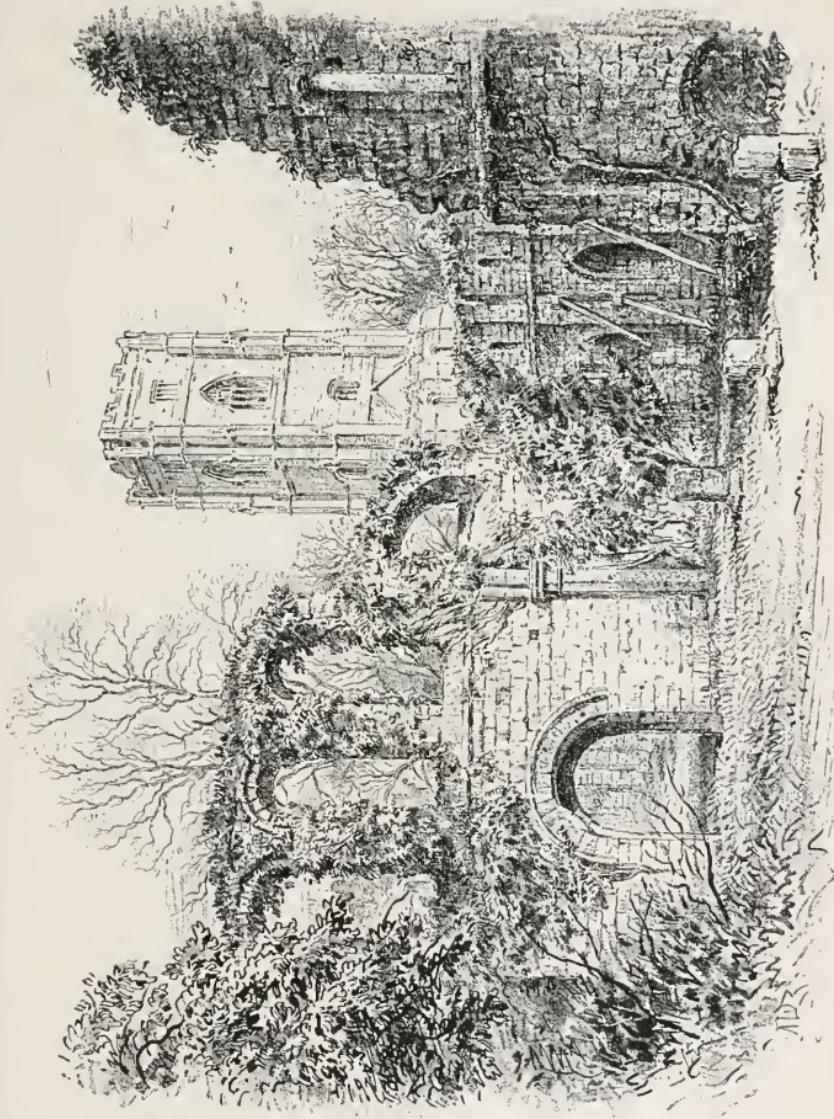
When the number of these holy malcontents had grown to thirteen—the prescribed minimum for a new foundation—they began to consider what decisive step they should take. "It was not poverty that they feared, nor the severity of winter; their only thought was how their purpose could be carried out, and at the same time peace preserved among the brethren, and scandal avoided." Soon, however, their project began to be talked about. They were accused of levity, contumacy, innovation. Almost every one made his voice heard, and there was much noise in the monastery. The matter was referred to Abbot

Geoffrey, a worn-out old man. He was aghast at the novelty of the thing, and bade them give up the attempt at once. But all his exhortations and arguments were in vain ; their resolve only gathered strength.

Now at that time Thurstan, of pious memory, was Archbishop of York, and Prior Richard, being his private friend, watched his opportunity to discover to him the holy purpose. The Archbishop at once signified his approval, promised to help the reformers, and proposed a visitation of the Abbey. But the venerable Geoffrey was not to be caught asleep. He collected learned men from many English monasteries, and a great concourse of monks came together. "On the appointed day the holy prelate appeared in the spirit of gentleness and peace, having in his company, as became him, men of gravity and discretion, secular clergy, canons, and many other religious persons." The Abbot hastened to meet him at the door of the chapter-house with a mob of monks, and forbade his entrance. He must not come with so large a following ; and, besides, no secular ought to be let into the secrets of the chapter. Let him come alone, if come he must. The Archbishop declined to dismiss his supporters ; and the natural hostility of monks and seculars soon produced an open quarrel, and a

disgraceful riot ensued in the cloister. At last the Archbishop commanded silence, and thundered out his interdict, and then he and his party withdrew into the church—"even," says the chronicler, "as the fat is separated from the flesh."

After this, thirteen monks, viz. twelve priests and one layman, left St. Mary's with the Archbishop, taking with them none of the goods of the monastery but the mere clothes they wore. At first Thurstan housed and fed them at York, and hearing that Abbot Geoffrey had sent messengers to complain to the King himself, as well as to many bishops and abbots, he wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury, who was also Papal legate. Meanwhile, Geoffrey made strenuous efforts to induce the seceders to return; and two of them, Gervase and Radolph, or Ralph, yielded to temptation and returned to the comparative luxury of St. Mary's. Of these, Gervase once more repented and threw in his lot, at last, with his outcast brothers; but Ralph "made a covenant with his flesh, and his belly clave to the earth." "Safety lies in a mean, be contented with your former mediocrity"—such, if we may trust our chronicler, was the devil's whisper to the apostates. "This is indeed the finger of God," wrote St. Bernard not long afterwards; "for it is more rare for the



FOUNTAINS ABBEY. FROM THE SOUTH

good to press on to perfection than for the bad to become good—would that I might come over and see this great sight.”¹

Now Thurstan, the friend of St. Bernard and of Prior Richard, had an estate at Ripon, with a palace and park, and here, in this year, 1132, he determined to keep Christmas. By this time, Robert of Whitby must have replaced the backsliding Ralph, for on the 26th of December we find Thurstan taking with him towards the valley of the Skell the full complement of thirteen monks. Then and there did the Archbishop assign to these homeless fugitives a place not for rest but for labour. They had desired loneliness and hard living, and they were taken at their word.

The Temple of Piety, or even Anne Boleyn’s Seat, would have been a luxurious dwelling to these wanderers; but, alas! they had arrived six hundred years too soon. We spend a summer day among Lord Ripon’s terraces and well-kept walks, but these men faced the winter nights among the rocks. “It

¹ “*Digitus Dei est iste, subtiliter operans, salubriter immutans, non quidem ex malis bonos, sed ex bonis faciens meliores. Quis dabit mihi ut transeam et visionem videam hanc maximam?—facilius reperies multos seculares converti ad bonum quam quempiam e religiosis transire ad melius.*”—*Epistola Sancti Bernardi ad Abbatem Ricardum Fontanensem et socios ejus.*

was a place," says Serlo, "which had never been inhabited, overgrown with thorns, a hollow in the hills between projecting rocks; fitter, to all appearance, to be a lair of wild beasts than a home for men." Here Thurstan left the monks, and here they remained. At first the rocks were literally their only shelter, but soon they chose a great elm in the middle of the valley, and thatched a sort of hut around its trunk.¹

In the presence of the Archbishop they solemnly elected Prior Richard as their Abbot. "He had no shelter from the rain, and it was winter," but still "he casts his care upon God, and girds himself against the stress of poverty with abundance of faith." And so they began the life they had longed for. From

¹ So says the chronicle. Local tradition points to some ancient yews on the bank as the first shelter of the monks. "On the south side are five or six yew-trees, all yet (1757) growing except the largest, which was blown down a few years ago. They are of an incredible size, the circumference of the trunk of one of them is at least 14 feet about a yard from the ground, and the branches in proportion to the trunk; they are all nearly of the same bulk, and are so nigh together as to make an excellent cover, almost equal to that of a thatched roof. Under these trees, we are told by tradition, the monks resided till they built the monastery; which seems to me to be very probable if we consider how little a yew-tree increases in a year and to what a bulk these are grown. And as the hill-side was covered with wood, which is now almost all cut down except these trees, it seems as if they were left standing to perpetuate the memory of the monks' habitation there during the first winter of their residence."—BURTON, *Monasticon Eborac.*

time to time Thurstan sent them bread, and they drank the water of the stream.

As yet these poor monks can hardly have seen in the gritstone of the sheltering rock the "promise and presage" of an architectural masterpiece. At present their daily labour is the making of mats and the cutting of faggots for a wattled oratory, while a few of the more skilful take to gardening. "There is no sadness, not a murmur is heard, but with all cheerfulness they bless the Lord, poor indeed in worldly goods, but strong in faith."

When winter was over, Abbot Richard and his monks began to consider under what rule they should live, for hitherto they had only tried to conform, after a fashion of their own, to that of St. Benedict. By this time the Cistercian house of Rievaulx had begun to make its influence felt, and moreover it cannot be doubted that Thurstan had told his friends how a work after their own hearts was being carried on at Clairvaux. To St. Bernard, then, as might have been expected, they sent certain of their number with an intimation that they had chosen him for their spiritual father. Clairvaux thus became the mother house of Fountains, and St. Bernard sent one of his monks, Geoffrey by name, to teach the new rule and direct the building operations in the valley

of the Skell. It must not, however, be forgotten that as Fountains was a daughter of Clairvaux, so was Clairvaux itself of Citeaux; and the system which Geoffrey introduced at Fountains was in reality that of Robert of Molesme and Stephen Harding the Englishman.

For two years the new monastery, increasing in numbers but not in wealth, endured great hardships; and when at last, in spite of Thurstan's generosity, they were reduced to a diet of boiled leaves and salt, their resolution gave way, and the Abbot himself went to beg St. Bernard to remove them to one of the granges, or small dependencies, of Clairvaux. The request was granted, but meanwhile the tide had turned. The wealth, which was to be more fatal to Fountains than all its privations, had begun to flow in.

Hugh, Dean of York, had joined the brotherhood, and brought with him both money in abundance and a fine collection of books of the Holy Scriptures, and Serlo (not the chronicler) and Tosti, canons of the same cathedral, soon followed his example.

Then came gifts and conveyances of land from neighbouring lords; and when King Stephen was at York, in 1135, he confirmed the monks in their possessions, and exempted them from all aids, taxes,

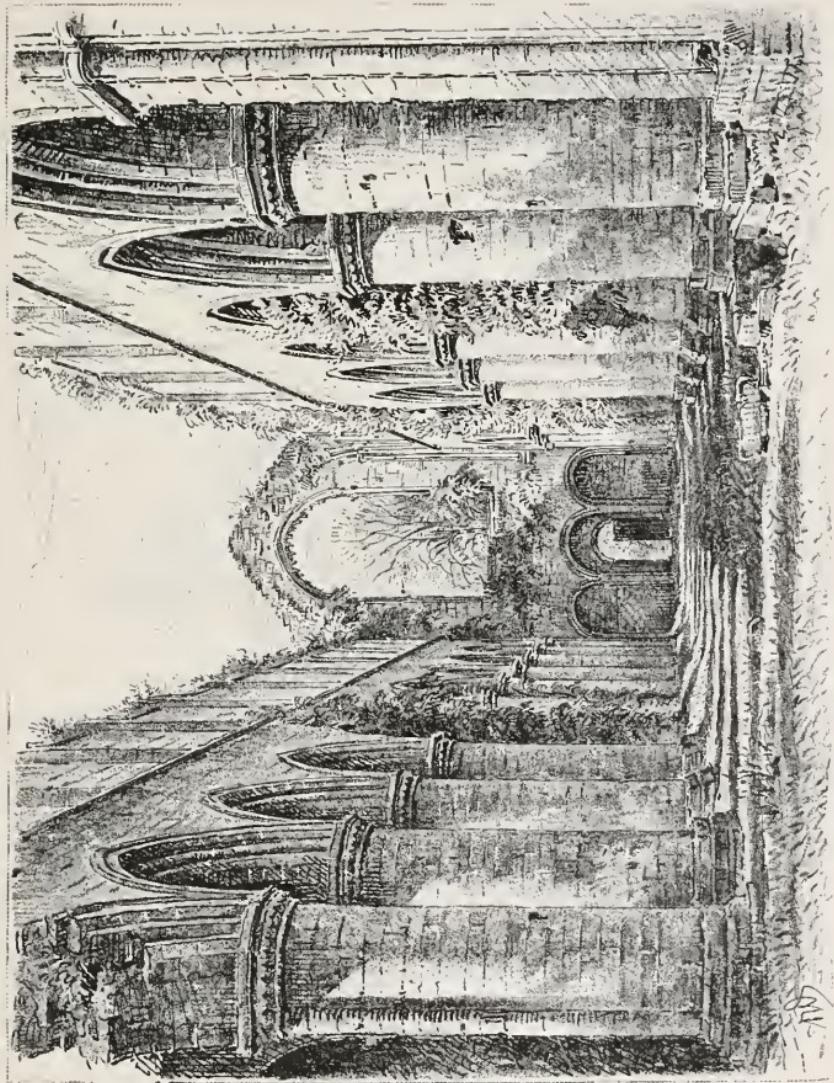
danegelds, assesses, pleas, and scutages, as well as from all customs and land service due to superior lords. The Monastery of Our Lady of Fountains had now fairly taken root. Three years of zeal and devotion had worked their oft-repeated miracle. Henceforth the founding of fresh abbeys and the building of their own were to be the signs of life and vigour among the once persecuted seceders from York : the gifts and bequests of those whose only motives were superstition and selfish fear were to be the seeds of its decay and omens of its fall. It is only positive and vital impulses that can create, and vivify, and mould. The terror that haunts the rich man's deathbed may rob his heirs, but it can raise no lasting memorial of itself.

The first colony from Fountains was Newminster. In less than two years followed Kirkstead and Haverholme (afterwards removed to the neighbourhood of Louth). The latter house was established under Gervase as its first Abbot. Thus the "back-slidēr" becomes once more visible to us as we gaze into the beryl-stone of history, and we can think of him among the many to whom, for our comfort, victory has been given in spite, as it were, of themselves. In 1145 Abbot Murdac supplied monks for De Bolbec, the founder of Woburn ; and the next

year a visit from Sigward, Bishop of Bergen, led to the settlement of thirteen monks from Fountains at Lysa in Norway. From Fountains, too, went Serlo, the chronicler, and eleven others, under Alexander the Prior, to Bernoldswic, and eventually to Kirkstall, while only five days later Bytham (afterwards Vaudey) was added to the list. Finally, in 1150, the Earl of Albemarle founded Meaux Abbey, with Adam, one of the original seceders from York, as its Abbot. Thus within twenty years Fountains became the mother of seven monasteries.

John de Cancia—Kentish John—was pre-eminently the builder-abbot of Fountains. After the partial destruction by fire in 1146 of the then existing conventional buildings and oratory, the work went on, we must conclude, unceasingly for the remainder of the century; but in 1203 the church was not large enough for the multitude of monks, and the Abbot bethought him of building a great choir. It was not, however, till the time of the before-mentioned John de Cancia (1220-1249) that this vision was fully realised. We can thus trace the growth of our Abbey through the late Norman and transition styles to the definite Early English, to which, undoubtedly, the work of “Kentish John” belongs. But the architectural and antiquarian features of

FOUNTAINS ABBEY. THE NAVE OF THE CHURCH



Fountains Abbey are a wide and important subject, and for the purpose of even a slight and hasty discussion of them it will be necessary, and it is hoped not altogether tiresome, to devote a separate chapter to their consideration. At present we may connect with Mr. Brunet-Debaines's drawing of the nave the thought of those earlier years in the history of the foundation during which the severe and lofty Cistercian spirit had its most perfect work, and "the monks sought their daily bread by the sweat of their brows, planting with their life-blood the vineyard of the Lord of Hosts."¹ But the engraving of the exterior, in which the great tower is prominent, speaks chiefly of a day of ominous departure from Cistercian simplicity.

In the latter part of the thirteenth century came a period of depression. John le Romaine, Archbishop of York, writing in 1294 to the monks who had been sent from Clairvaux as visitors of the Cistercian houses in England, mentions the necessitous state of Fountains, and attributes it, in part at least, to misconduct and extravagance.

Burton (*Monasticon Eborac.*, p. 143) tells us the Archbishop roundly asserted that the monks of

¹ This passage from the chronicler of Meaux, describing the monastic life there under Adam—once a monk at Fountains—is borrowed from an interesting pamphlet, entitled, *Charters of Roche Abbey*, by Sidney Oldall Addy, M.A.

Fountains were become a laughing-stock to the kingdom, and he does not wonder at it. But, with this exception, they enjoyed a high reputation, and consequent steady increase in their revenues and territory, till at last, in 1535, their estates were certified by the Commissioners to be worth close upon £1000 a year. This income—which, it is needless to say, must not be estimated by our present standard—was produced mainly by a vast extent of landed property, including, amongst other items, an estate of 60,000 acres in a ring-fence in Craven. The account of the possessions of the monastery in flocks and herds is, perhaps, even more impressive—1976 head of cattle, 1106 sheep, 86 horses, and 79 swine, were found at the dissolution, besides 117 quarters of wheat, 13 of rye, 134 of oats, and 192 loads of hay in the more distant granges, and 160 loads of hay and 128 quarters of corn in the park and granaries of the Abbey.¹ For his interest in all these, Marmaduke Bradley, thirty-third and last Abbot, the nominee of Layton and Legh, received an annuity of £100 a year. Was it for this, we are tempted to ask, that Prior Richard and his brethren had left all and braved the winter in the wilderness?

¹ There was also much valuable plate, which, including chalice, crosses, etc., amounted to £708:5:9*d.* Amongst the domestic part were twenty silver-gilt spoons (16 and 4), besides many of ungilt silver.

V

FOUNTAINS (*continued*)

WE have seen by this time something of what the realities of contrition and adoration can effect. They cannot save men from error, they cannot bestow the modern Englishman's cherished attribute of common sense ; but at least they are genuine and unmistakable, and the angels as they gaze are not perplexed. The pale shadows of these somewhat unmanageable graces, the feeling for a feeling and thought about a thought, are compatible with easy postures in accustomed armchairs, but they themselves are goads and scourges, to be prayed for, if at all, with judicious faintness. It remains to examine, in as much detail as our space permits, the buildings of which we have sketched the history. Though the original Cistercian churches conformed with exactness to certain well-known limitations, and were built without exception on one recognisable plan, it is remarkable that, in

Yorkshire at least, the perfect type is nowhere to be found. We know the idea, and can everywhere trace its influence,—but where is its full embodiment? "Perhaps," as Plato would say, "it is stored up in heaven." Wherever it may be, we can assert with confidence that it is in the form of a Latin cross, severe in detail and sparing of ornament, with a short and aisleless presbytery, and at most a humble and unobtrusive central tower, rising just one square above the crossing of the nave and transept. It is, in fact, just such an abbey as we are all familiar with, and yet most likely have never seen. For it is not at Rievaulx, where the eastern arm is long; it is not at Byland, where it is aisled; it is not at Roche, where there are such scanty remains of the church;¹ it is not at Jervaulx, where there are practically none; it is not even at Kirkstall, where a normal church is surmounted by the ruins of a lofty tower; and least of all is it at Fountains. The world, "lest one good custom should corrupt" it, made haste to corrupt the good custom of Cistercian Puritanism—and it must be confessed that the "nine altars" and the great tower of Fountains are but the glorious disguises of decay.

¹ At Roche, however, and, but for the tower, at Kirkstall, the Cistercian type must once have been practically exemplified.

It is pretty certain that building operations were not begun at Fountains till very near the middle of the twelfth century.¹ The outlines of the modest presbytery which was then erected are still preserved, in instructive contrast with the work of John of Kent, and the nave and transept are mainly of the same early date. At the west end, however, the original Norman lights, surmounted, perhaps, by a circle, have been replaced, late in the fifteenth century, by a large perpendicular window, while the attempt of Abbot Huby—or perhaps his predecessor John Darnton—some hundred years later, to prop the central tower is attested by the unsightly presence of a huge internal buttress against the south-east pier of the transept.

The distinctive national variety of Romanesque architecture which we owe to the Normans passed gradually, as did the early styles of continental countries, into the first pure Gothic. From the nave of Durham or the transepts of Winchester to Salisbury is a transition which was not effected at a bound. To illustrate the intermediate steps Sir Gilbert Scott has chosen three examples. They are

¹ So say Sir Gilbert Scott and Mr. Walbran, but others have thought the early part was built before the fire of 1140. *Vide* Parker's *Introduction to Gothic Architecture*.

the Abbeys of Fountains and Kirkstall and the "galilee" of Durham itself. The first of these represents a style essentially Romanesque, but adopting to a considerable extent the pointed arch. The second, still Romanesque, is perceptibly more advanced; while the third, in spite of its simple semicircular arches, is of the very latest character that can be called Norman. It would be easy to accumulate examples and illustrations, but one in particular will suggest itself to those who have read the previous chapters of this book. Byland is very nearly contemporary with the Durham "galilee," but the two are strikingly unlike. The lower windows, for example, of the former are round-headed, but the upper are pointed, as are the arches; while the mouldings are Early English rather than Norman.

We have thus the round-arched work at Durham going on side by side with the partially pointed at Byland, and distinctly later than that at Fountains. In fact, the pointed arch often occurs in transition work, and is, of course, invariably found in even the earliest pure Gothic, but it is by no means rare in the most undisputed Norman, and does not spread in proportion to the development of the transition.

The particular combination of the two construc-

tions at Fountains is worth noticing. The eleven, or rather twenty-two, pointed arches of the nave rest on columns 23 feet high and 16 feet in circumference, and the transverse vaulting of the aisles is pointed ; but the bays are divided by semicircular arches, and the windows are round-headed and without shafts or mouldings.

The absence of a triforium seems in character with the solemn simplicity of this part of the church, while the warm colour of the stone and the soft turf under foot redeem its chill unroofed severity. But the fine unbroken vista which we now admire had no existence for those who kept the sacred hours day and night within these walls.

“ The whole church,” says Mr. Micklethwaite, “ was divided into parts in a manner which is, I believe, quite peculiar to the Cistercians. The aisles were cut off from the nave by solid stone walls, built flush with the pillars on the nave side. The transepts and choir aisles, where there were any, were also cut off by stone screens ; but they were lower and not so thick as those to the nave, and may possibly have been pierced. The transverse divisions seem to have resembled those of Benedictine and collegiate churches, but I have found full evidence of them *only at Fountains*. There was a ‘*pulpitum*’ of stone taking up the space of one bay at the entrance of the choir ; a bay west of it was the rood screen, with its central altar and two doors ; and one bay west again was a wood screen forming the fence of the rood altar. All these screens were continued

across the aisles, and accommodation for minor altars seems to have been found against them. At Fountains, also, two bays of the south aisle were screened off to form a chapel. Here and elsewhere the pulpitum was placed considerably to the west of the eastern arm and transept."¹

The inmates of the infirmary, including old and feeble monks as well as the sick, had a special place allotted to them, called the retro-chorus, between the pulpitum and the rood screen. Another part of the church² was assigned to the *conversi*, or lay brothers; a third to the *familiares*, or honorary associates; a fourth to the *mercennarii*, or hired servants; and yet another to guests from the *hospitium*. All these subdivisions necessitated numerous entrances, as each was accessible from the outside.

Fountains Abbey, like Durham Cathedral, had both an eastern and a western annex. Not long, it would seem, after the completion of the west front, a narthex or galilee, 15 feet wide, was added. This was in effect a porch, with open arcade extending the whole width of the western front, and used, though with what restrictions is not clear, as a burial-

¹ See a paper, *Of the Cistercian Plan*, by J. T. Micklethwaite, F.S.A. Reprinted from the *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*.

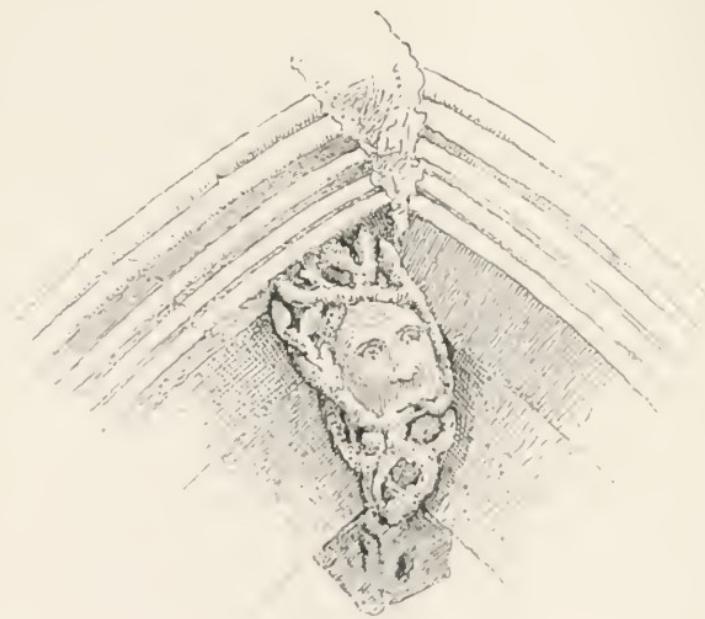
² Mr. W. H. S. John Hope has now satisfied himself that the part so used was the nave; and that its appropriation as the choir of the *conversi* accounts for its being cut off from the aisles in the manner described by Mr Micklethwaite.

place. Through the thirteenth-century presbytery, begun by Abbot John of York, and continued and completed by his successors and namesakes, John Pherd and John of Kent, we pass to the beautiful and striking eastern transept—the Lady Chapel or Chapel of Nine Altars. This was mainly, if not altogether, the work of the indefatigable John of Kent. Its façade, 150 feet in length, is the first part of the church to become visible when the more distant glimpses of the tower have been lost in the winding approaches of the valley. The great east window, 60 feet by 23 feet 4 inches, is obviously a late fifteenth-century addition. The nine lights and elaborate tracery of this window seem to have replaced three original lancets, such as may still be seen in the corresponding position at Durham.

With the exception of this and two other windows of the same date in the gables, the Chapel of Nine Altars is pure Early English, and may be compared with the work of Bishop Poore at Salisbury, as well as with the Nine Altars at Durham.

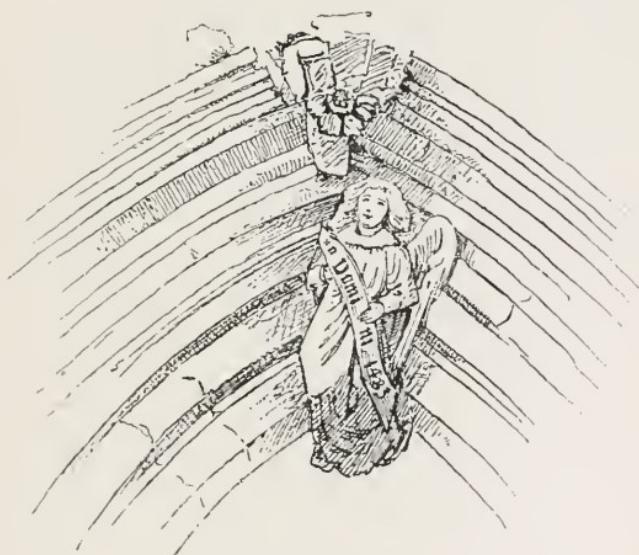
John Darnton, Abbot of Fountains from 1479 to 1494, has not left us in doubt as to the date and authorship of the later parts of the work. On a key-stone inserted to hide a settlement in one of the original lancets has been carved the bust of an angel

holding a tun and bearing on his breast the word 'Dern.' Above is an eagle, and a scroll with the words "B'N'D'FONTES DNO" (*Benedicite fontes Domino*), and on the inside of the same stone an angel holding a blank shield, a mitred head,



and a figure of St. James of Compostella, standing on two fishes. There is also on the keystone of another Early English window, at the north-east of the chapel, a human head entwined with leaves, and on the inside an angel with a scroll on which is the date "Anno Domini 1483." The lower walls of this chapel, as well as of the presbytery, are adorned

with a beautiful trifoliated arcading, the design of which was repeated in the reredos of the high altar and the screen walls in the arcades. Of the upper walls of the aisle I cannot speak with equal admiration. The lancets are here placed each under an arcade of one pointed arch between two round-



headed ones. The latter rest on one side on single columns from which spring the pointed arches over the lancet windows, while on the other they descend much lower to meet the clustered shafts which carried the vaulting ribs. It is perhaps difficult in the present state of the building to judge of the original effect of this arrangement, but it must surely have

been more striking than beautiful. At present, indeed, the presbytery is at best but a seemly antechamber to the glories of the Lady Chapel, but in justice to Abbot John de Cancia we should remember that such was neither the intention nor the original effect of his design.

At the end of the north transept, rising to a height of nearly 170 feet, is Abbot Huby's tower. In the inscriptions above and below its belfry windows, this majestic structure seems to plead humbly for its own right to existence :—" To the King eternal, immortal, invisible "; " To God alone be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen." " Only to the praise of God, and not for any pride or extravagance of men," it seems to say, " was the old Puritanism forgotten. Times have changed, and what was seemly in the twelfth century and suitable to the poverty of a new order is unworthy now of the greatness and prosperity of this famous Cistercian house." What St. Bernard would have said to this " doctrine of development " may be open to question, but there can be little doubt that Abbot Huby's best apology is not in the humility of his inscription, but in the triumphant beauty of his work. He must indeed be an uncompromising hater of perpendicular architecture who can resist the simple charm of such perfect proportion.

As we, not seldom, wear the semblance of our own past selves, and preserve in a look or turn of speech some grace long lost out of our lives, so the old tradition seems to have lurked and lingered among these innovators, the old severity to have haunted and subdued their thoughts.

It is time to say a few words about the domestic buildings which at Fountains are so well preserved and so interesting. Instead of attempting a general description, it will be best to confine ourselves mainly to that which is here most distinctive.

In speaking of Rievaulx Abbey, I referred to the Cistercian frater, and its pulpit; and I shall therefore only mention here that the great size of the frater at Fountains, viz. 109 feet by 46, prevented its being roofed in a single span, and it was consequently vaulted on a row of four marble columns, of which, however, little or nothing now remains. The hall is a fine specimen of Early English domestic architecture, but it is in fact less remarkable than the kitchen. In accordance with the invariable Cistercian plan, the latter is placed immediately on one side of the frater, and, with its yard or garth, corresponds to the warming-house and its woodyard on the other.¹

¹ Under the frater and through, or close by, both these yards, may usually be traced the main drain of the monastery.

The warming-house at Fountains belongs to the twelfth century. Its vaulting rested upon a single pillar, and it contains two noble chimneys, each between 16 and 17 feet wide and over 6 feet deep. The "heads" of these "are straight, and formed of huge stones dovetailed together on the principle of an arch."

On the infirmary alone, which it has been the fashion to call the Abbot's house, a chapter might be written, but we must reserve this subject till we can compare the ruins at Kirkstall with those now before us. Meanwhile it is time to pass to that huge, mysterious building west of the cloisters, to which Mr. Sharpe has given the name of *Domus Conversorum*. It is with regret, and even with trepidation, that one rejects this august misnomer. "Who," it must be asked, "were the '*conversi*'?"

At Sherborne, in Dorsetshire, where the influence of Dunstan had anticipated by 150 years the Cistercian revival, was passed the boyhood of him who, as Stephen Harding, Abbot of Citeaux, was to promulgate the reformed Benedictine rule. To him and to Alberic is due the development, though not the invention, of lay-brotherhood. Manual labour, the half-forgotten command of St. Benedict, was made an important part of the monastic discipline of the reformers. The monks must till the ground with



FOUNTAINS ABBEY. THE CHAPEL OF THE NINE ALTARS

their own hands, but they must also be in their places in choir at the canonical hours. These duties were soon found to be incompatible, for even the command of his Abbot could not enable a monk to be in two places at once. But it had long been the custom to admit to Benedictine monasteries humble, illiterate, and needy applicants in the capacity of lay brethren. Life was not made smooth for these men within the sacred enclosure ; but then, neither had the outer world been too gracious to them. They had no turn for mystic contemplation, no voice for service in the choir, no skill in copying or illumination, but in offering their labour in exchange for a safe and unvarying subsistence, they had doubtless a dim comfort and uplifting from the thought that they were giving to God the little with which He had provided them. In the modern labour-yard and casual ward such fancies do not harbour—there is more cleanliness, but perhaps less self-respect. The result of the multiplication of the *conversi* was that in every Cistercian abbey, as has been well pointed out, there were two monasteries—one, viz. of “lay brethren,” and one of “choir brethren.”

The rules for the former were very strict, and, according to our notions, somewhat vexatious. No *conversus* is to possess a book, or learn anything but

his "Pater noster," his "Credo," and his "Miserere" and "Ave Maria," etc., which he is to know by heart.

If a *conversus* is disobedient to such overseer or master of the works as may from time to time be set over him, he is to be flogged in the chapter-house, and to eat his food for three days, seated on the floor in the presence of the other *conversi*, and without a tablecloth. Wherever the monks observed silence there the *conversi* must also be speechless, and they are to go nowhere without leave.

In their own dorter and frater they are to observe perpetual silence, and indeed everywhere else ; unless the Abbot or Prior, or, in cases where he is entrusted with this authority, the cellarer, happens to have ordered them to speak. The same rule applies to all the craftsmen of the monastery—the weavers, the millers, the tanners. Only the smiths are permitted to speak, "because they can hardly labour in silence without detriment to their work." The shepherds and ploughmen may speak to their underlings (*juniores*), and *vice versa*, while at work. They are to return the salutations of strangers ; and if a traveller asks the way, they are to tell him without unnecessary words. If, however, he addresses them on other subjects, they are to answer that they may not continue the conversation. A short service of responses



THE FRATER. FOUNTAINS' ABBEY

is prescribed for their grace before meat in their frater. "And then the Prior, making the sign (of the cross) with his hand, shall say, 'In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,' the rest answering 'Amen.' And so let them sit down to table in order and eat." But if any one should miss his response three times, his due portion of wine is to be taken from him and he is to begin eating after all the others.

Then when "refection" is over, the Prior rises and begins the "Miserere," which is recited by him and the *conversi* verse by verse antiphonally; and so, passing into the church, they there say softly to themselves the "Pater noster," and the Prior having made the sign of the cross, they too sign themselves and bow and go their ways. But those whose turn it is to wait at table finish their response in the frater, and altogether omit the final "Pater noster." By these and many more such minute regulations was the life, and work, and worship, of the lay-brothers fenced about.

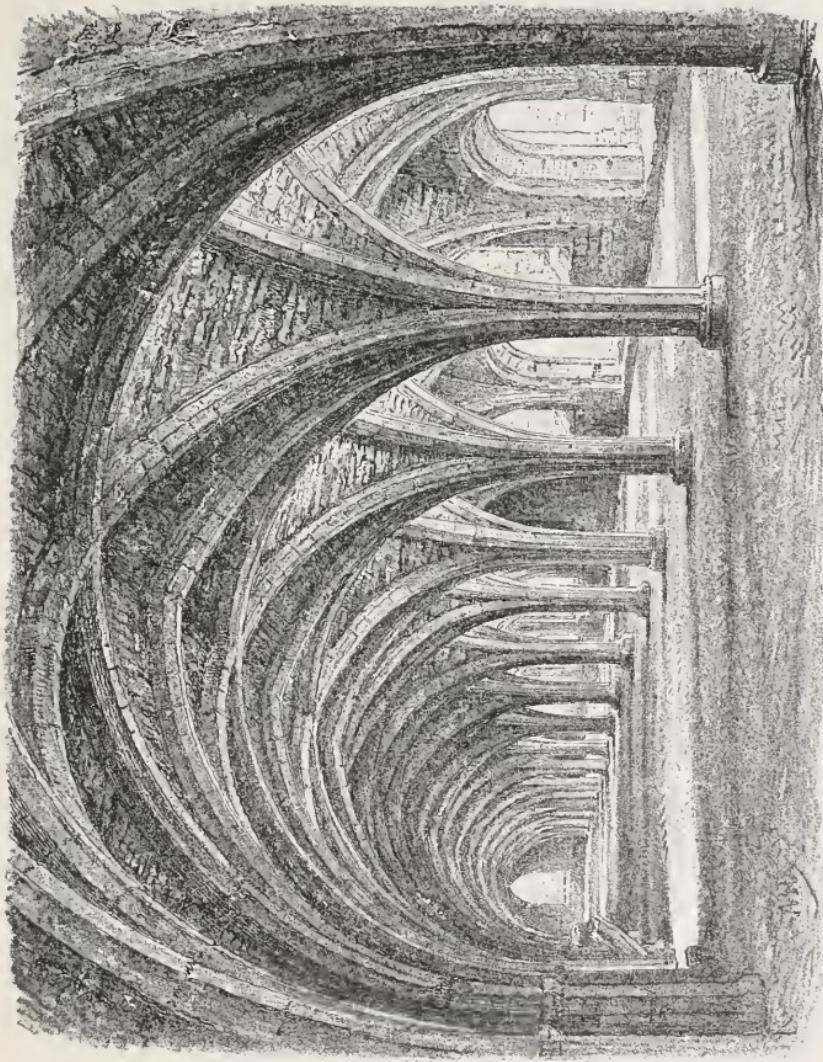
In St. Bernard's own church at Clairvaux, stalls were provided for 177 monks and 351 *conversi*; and it is at least certain that a Cistercian monastery had to provide places for the eating, sleeping, and working, as well as for the worship, of a very large

proportion of laymen, in addition to the accommodation required for the clerics.

When archaeologists became aware of these facts, and remembered the large two-storied buildings, so especially conspicuous at Jervaulx and at Fountains, which had hitherto for sheer want of a better name been called "ambulatories," they not unnaturally connected them with the *conversi*. The connection is real; but the name "*Domus Conversorum*" erroneously assumes that the whole range was given up to the *conversi*. It is also said by those best conversant with monastic terminology to lack authority. This building, which we shall most safely call the "*cellarium*," was in fact not one, but two.

It is to the hand of Time, or perhaps of some bold admirer of the picturesque, that we owe the impressive vista which Mr. Brunet-Debaines has sketched. Here, as in the church, the monks had other and more practical notions. At Beaulieu Abbey, in Hampshire, the distinction between the two ranges of the *cellarium* is very marked; and at Fountains the place where they were divided is sufficiently obvious. Above was the dormer of the *conversi*, communicating in all cases by a private staircase with the church. The southern half was their frater, and had a hatch from the kitchen.

THE CELLARIUM, FOUNTAINS ABBEY



Strange, indeed, and, as it were, prophetic, must have been the dumbness of the busy fields and workshops by the Skell. The sound of distant voices from peopled valleys comes to us upon the hillside with an unthought-of thrill of sympathy and consciousness of kind ; but in the lonely chapel on “ Michael-How ” only the bells of the parent church broke the stillness, while at that sound shepherds would kneel among their sheep, and ploughmen by their resting oxen, to join in spirit with their brethren chanting the office in the Abbey choir.

With a last and very different thought we must turn from this memory-haunted scene. On the south side of the stream is a well that still bears the name of Robin Hood, in memory, it is said, of the outlaw’s famous fight with “ the curtall friar of Fountains.”¹

“ Robin he took a solemn oath—
It was by Mary free—
That he would neither eat nor drink
Till that friar he did see.”

¹ “ Tradition,” says Mr. Walbran, “ points to the figures of a large bow and arrow and hound, graven on the north-east angle of the Lady Chapel, as a record of this dire affray. They bear no affinity to the symbols used by the masons ; but have, I fancy, induced the report, mentioned by Ritson, that Robin’s bow and arrow were preserved at Fountains Abbey.”

So Robin and the friar met and fought, till at last the friar had the best of it, and threw Robin into the Skell. Then Robin wound his horn, and brought fifty of his followers to his aid ; and, in his turn,

“The fryar he sit his fist to his mouth,
And whuted him whutes three ;
Half a hundred good bay dogs
Came running over the lea.”

So that, if “Little John” had not “shot with might and main,” it would still have gone hard with Robin.

Mr. Walbran tells us that when Sir Walter Scott visited Fountains, he was much struck with this legend ; and not only induced Mrs. Lawrence, the then owner of the Abbey, to build an arch over the spring, but also presented her with the following “Inscription for Robin Hood’s Well” :

“Beside this crystal font of old
Cooled his flushed brow an outlaw bold.
His bow was slackened while he drank,
His quiver rested on the bank,
Giving brief pause of doubt and fear
To feudal lords and forest deer.
Long since the date—but village sires
Still sing his feats by Christmas fires,
And still Old England’s free-born mood
Stirs at the name Robin Hood.”

VI

KIRKSTALL

IN the middle of the twelfth century a small town in Airedale was struggling into importance. The devastations of the Danes, which had almost swept away the "Loidis" of Bede, had long been forgotten, and the losses and miseries of the Norman Conquest were fast sinking into oblivion. But the Conqueror's feudal system still had its grip relentlessly upon the country, and the vills and towns were working out their own deliverance by humble steps, thankful the while for mercies which to modern Leeds would sound but small. Half a century or so before Ilbert di Laci had granted his vill of Leeds—a mere drop in the ocean of his vast estates—to Ralph Paganel, and the Paganels had since built themselves a castle and made a park which survives only in the names of Park Place, Park Row, Park Square, and Park Lane. To the protection of this castle and the

comparative security enjoyed by burgesses in times of turbulence and rapine the town of Leeds is thought to have owed its early prosperity. Already there is evidence of the exportation of grain and other commodities, and the Aire must have been navigable, at least for small vessels, and under favourable circumstances. And so, when in 1207 Maurice Paganel granted a charter to his burgage tenants at Leeds, creating a local court of justice, and conferring other valuable privileges and immunities, the town had evidently attained considerable importance, and the Domesday estimate of something under 1000 for the number of its inhabitants, and about £115 for its total value, must have been left far behind. Yet in this charter we are still face to face with serfdom and even slavery, for women sold into slavery are exempted from paying custom in the borough ; and though Yorkshire wool was now being sent from Leeds to Flanders, to return to England in the form of cloth, there is still the Paganel oven, in which the burgesses aforesaid "shall continue to bake as they have been accustomed," and the King's mill at which they must grind their corn. Meanwhile the De Lacy's had granted their neighbouring manor of Newsham to the Templars and founded and built the monastery of Kirkstall.

For the oven and the mill, and even for the Templars, we may search Airedale in vain, but the solid masonry of the Cistercians still survives—a huge and not unwelcome anachronism by the darkened and polluted stream.

“ Since the day when Henry de Lacy brought the Cistercians to this sweet retreat, how changed are the scenes which the river looks upon. Then from the high rocks of Malham and the pastures of Craven, to Loidis in Elmete, the deer, wild boar, and white bull, were wandering in unfrequented woods, or wading in untainted waters, or roaming over boundless heaths. Now, hundreds of thousands of men of many races have extirpated the wood, dyed the waters with tints derived from other lands, turned the heaths into fertile fields, and filled the valley with mills and looms, water-wheels, and engine-chimneys.”¹

Like the sound of brave words or fine music in dreary scenes and moments of depression is the sight of Kirkstall Abbey in the purlieus of dim, laborious Leeds. We are absorbed in business and harassed with care, our concern is with the practical needs of a workaday world, competition and progress—the present and the future—demand and exhaust our energies, we feel, and delight to feel, within and about us, the ceaseless vibration of the great industrial world. And yet—

¹ Phillips's *Rivers, Mountains, and Sea Coast of Yorkshire*, p. 94.

" . . . as angels in some brighter dreams
Speak to the soul while man doth sleep,
So some strange thoughts transcend our wonted themes
And into glory peep."

And so we welcome the words or the music to the making of which have gone such high desire and prescient assurance of triumph ; and even for us who, it may be, " lack time to mourn," there is a charm in the record of that strange mood of asceticism which enshrined its self-abasement in so much majesty.

It must, however, be confessed, at the outset, that the early history of Kirkstall does not so well accord with our notions of saintliness as that of the parent house of Fountains. The very origin of the former has in it an ignoble element. The founding of Rievaulx was due to the effect of bereavement upon a brave and manly heart, that of Byland to the spontaneous piety of the Mowbrays, that of Fountains to the reforming zeal of the monks of York ; but Kirkstall was generated in the terror and despondency of De Lacy's sickroom. It is true his purpose held and gathered strength with time ; it is not less true that his monastery outlived its early faults and grew to ripeness before it fell into decay.

When De Lacy was sufficiently recovered to set about performing his vow he consulted the Abbot of

Fountains, and, by his advice, decided to found a Cistercian monastery at Bernoldswic in Craven.

The land and money were to be the offering of the feudal lord ; the Abbot was to find the men and direct the work.

On the 19th May 1147, Alexander, Prior of Fountains, with twelve monks and ten lay brethren, took possession of the buildings which had been provided for them, and the Monastery of Mount St. Mary came into existence. Little can the new colony have imagined that, five years later, the anniversary of the Festival of St. Potentiana would find them forsaking the vill of Bernoldswic and the very name of Mount St. Mary. Whether the woody slope in Airedale which so took the fancy of Abbot Alexander was, as the legend runs,¹ already known by the prophetic name of Kirkstall, or whether we are to believe the statement of the chronicler that it was first so named by the Abbot himself, must, for all the light I can throw on the question, remain a mystery. For the leading facts of the migration there is sufficient evidence : the details may be taken or left as the reader is minded.

Alexander and his brethren lost no time in converting the vill of Bernoldswic into a hornets' nest.

¹ The legend is from a MS. in the Bodleian, G. 9, fol. 129a.

From Serlo we only learn that they suffered much from cold and hunger, both because of the climate, and because, in the disturbed state of the kingdom, their goods were repeatedly plundered by robbers; and that at last, wearied out with these losses and privations, they obtained the consent of their founder to turn Mount St. Mary into a grange and remove to Kirkstall. But the venerable monk seems to have omitted from his narrative a somewhat important incident.

There was at Bernoldswic an ancient and perhaps dilapidated parish church—*antiqua nimis et ab olim fundata*—to which were attached five parochial vills, viz. Bernoldswic, the two Mertons, Bracewell, and Stoke. From Bernoldswic, and its appurtenant members of Elwinsthorp and Brodene, the inhabitants were removed to make room for the monks. This departure from the Cistercian custom of appropriating solitary and uncultivated tracts, and becoming the pioneers of agriculture as well as centres of religion, proved most disastrous. The parishioners assembled as of old to celebrate the feasts of the Church ; and as they were of course accompanied by their priest and his secular clergy, we are not surprised to learn that "they were troublesome to the monastery and to the monks who abode in the same."



KIRKSTALL ABBEY, FROM THE RIVER

Abbot Alexander was no mere dreamer. With a view to securing peace and quietness for his monks, he promptly levelled the church with the ground, amid the loud remonstrances of clergy and people. Even in the twelfth century such a high-handed proceeding could not pass unchallenged. One of the secular clergy, who was rector and parson (*rector et persona ecclesiæ*), cited the Abbot and monks before the Metropolitan; but, eventually, the case went up to the supreme court—the “*sedes apostolica*”—where the parson and parishioners of a Yorkshire parish had but little chance against the great Cistercian order. The monks, in short, prevailed, and their opponents were not only defeated but put to silence.

“For it seemed holy and laudable that a church should fall, if so an Abbey might be built; that of two goods the less should give place to the greater, and that the party which was most rich in fruits of devotion should prevail. And so, peace being restored, and the controversy set at rest, the brethren proceeded to promote by gentler measures the objects of their foundation.”

For five or six years the Monastery of St. Mary’s continued its troubled and unprofitable existence; but at last the Abbot, travelling on the business of the house, found, as it were by chance, the solution of his difficulties. In the deep shadow of a wooded

vale, he came upon certain men in a quasi-religious habit, and he soon found that they were living as devout men might have lived before the days of St. Benedict: a fraternity of hermits, if the expression may be tolerated, without organisation and without rule. The beauty of the place charmed the Abbot, and he turned aside to converse with the recluses. The story told by their spokesman, Seleth, was as follows :

He had come from the south of England, alone, and guided only by a heavenly voice. "Arise, Seleth," it had seemed to say, "and go into the province of York, and seek diligently in the valley which is called Airedale for a place known as Kirkstall, for there shalt thou prepare for a brotherhood a home where they may serve my Son."

"And who," he asked, "is thy Son whom we must serve?"

"I am Mary," was the answer; "and my Son is called Jesus of Nazareth, the Saviour of the world."

So Seleth woke, and having pondered the vision, set his hope on the Lord, and without delay left his hearth and home. The place was easily found, and when he had lived there alone for some days, eating only roots and herbs, he was joined by others, and they adopted the way of life of the brethren of Serath,

having all things in common and supporting themselves by their toil.

As the Abbot listened, he considered the attractions and advantages of the valley—its flowing river and abundant timber for workshops. It seemed to him an altogether desirable place, and he accordingly began to gently admonish the brethren. Had they no fears for the safety and sanctification of their souls, poor masterless disciples and priestless laymen as they were? He set before them a more perfect way and a higher type of the religious life, and so departed to his patron.

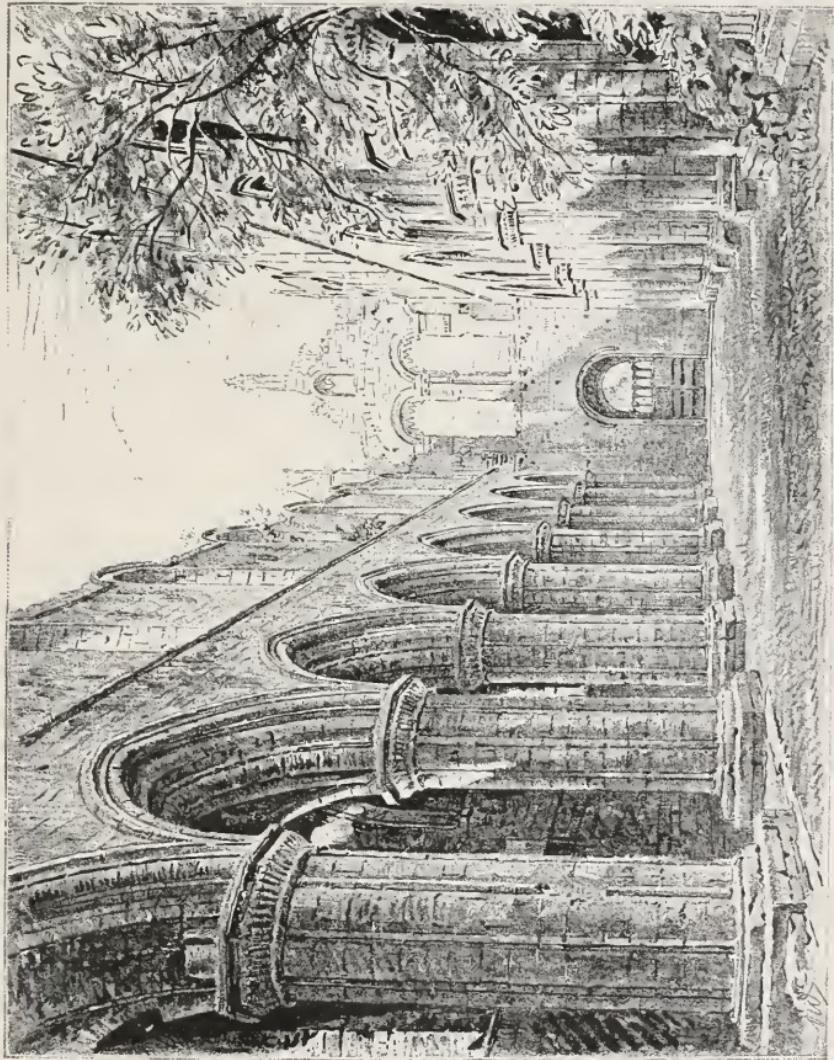
De Lacy approved the plan, and persuaded William de Poictou to grant the lands in Airedale to the monks in perpetuity at the rent of five marks annually. Then the Abbot, having made sure of a more suitable place for his monastery, built a church in honour of the ever Virgin Mother of God, and such humble offices as were needful, and adopted for his monastery the name of Kirkstall from that day¹ forward. For thirty-five years did the abbacy of this most practical ascetic last, and in that time he began and finished the church and monastic buildings. “Kirkstall Abbey,” says Whitaker, “is a monument of the skill, the taste, and the perseverance

¹ 19th May 1152.

of a single man." Mr. Walbran discovered, from an instrument of Archbishop Murdac in the treasury of the Dean and Chapter of York, that, at the request of Abbot Alexander and the monks of Kirkstall, the two chapels of Bracewell and Marton were raised by the Archbishop to their present dignity of mother churches, each with its own parish.¹ This instrument is unfortunately not dated, but we may hope it is the record of a really generous and disinterested reparation, made when the good will of their old neighbours was no longer necessary to the peace and comfort of the monks.

Alexander was succeeded by Ralph Hageth, of Fountains, a good monk but bad manager, in whose time the valuable Grange of Micklethwaite was lost to Kirkstall. The monastery seems to have sought to enforce its appeal to King Henry by actually, for a time, breaking up and dispersing; and the Abbot hoped to soften the royal heart by gifts of a golden chalice and a copy of the Gospels. But all was in vain; and there was nothing for it but to return to Kirkstall and practise economy. Alexander, "true abbot in deed as well as in name" though he was, will hardly compare in saintliness either with the un-

¹ "Statuimus quod due capelle de Bracewell et Marton sint de cetero matres ecclesie, quilibet cum sua parochia."



KIRKSTALL ABBEY. INTERIOR OF THE CHURCH

practical Hageth or with one or two of his successors, of whom brief mention must now be made. The fourth Abbot, for instance, Turgesius by name, was an ascetic of the true medieval type. Not only did he abjure shoes in the bitterest weather and clothe himself continually in hair-cloth, but, with that rare logic of the emotions which is so unanswerable in theory and so self-refuting in practice, he wept continually for his own and other men's sins and miseries, and refused to be comforted. "Through levity of heart and small care for our failings," says the author of the *Imitatio*, "we become insensible of the real sorrows of our souls ; and so oftentimes we vainly laugh when we have just cause to weep." Into this error Turgesius was not likely to fall. "In common conversation he could scarcely refrain from weeping. At the altar, he never celebrated without such a profusion of tears, that his eyes might be said rather to rain than to weep, and scarcely any other person could use the sacerdotal vestments after him." He was thus an early example of the class of Christians who will not or cannot realise that goodness is, after all, on the winning side ; and who miss the strain of subdued triumph which sounds through all the Bible, till it breaks into the rapture of the Apocalypse, the dim but not uncertain herald-

light of dawn, which, falling upon saintly brows, reveals them to us "as sorrowful yet alway rejoicing." For nine years Turgesius governed Kirkstall, and then retired to weep away his remaining years at Fountains.

Two of his successors, Helias (1209) and Grimstone (1284), seem to have revived the businesslike traditions of Alexander; and there remains an excellent letter written by Grimstone from St. Sever in Gascony, whither he had gone to beg the intervention of King Edward I. between the monastery and its hungry creditors. Unfortunately the letter, which has been translated by Dr. Whitaker in his *History of Craven*, is too long for insertion in this place; and for the same reason we must content ourselves with a few brief extracts from that which Grimstone's successor, John de Bridsall, addressed to the convent while engaged on a similar mission. The latter savours less of the bursar and more of the priest, and in its wisdom and devout tone there is certainly nothing to remind us that we are close upon the date of *Piers Plowman's Vision* and *The Canterbury Tales*.

"Beloved," he begins, "we have written this letter in haste from Canterbury, knowing that an account of the success of our journey will be pleasing to you. In the first place, our dear

brother who was present will inform you, that on the morrow of St. Lawrence we were met by letters from the King in a very threatening style, that we were apprised of robbers who laid wait for us in the woods, under a rock, and that we were bound, under penalty of forfeiting all our goods, to abide the King's pleasure. However, having been at length dismissed from his presence with honour, we proceeded on our way ; and notwithstanding the delay in London, arrived at Canterbury on Monday evening, ourselves, our servants and horses, being all well. We are not without hope, therefore, that our feeble beginnings may be followed by better fortune," etc. "For the time we commend you, dear brethren, to God, and our bodily safety to your prayers. But especially pray for the salvation of our soul, for we are not greatly solicitous if this earthly part of us be delivered into the hand of the wicked one, so that the spirit be saved in the day of the Lord, which we hope for through your intercession ; yet we should wish, if it be the will of God, to be committed to the earth by your hands, wherever you shall dispose. But know assuredly that if we return, whoever appears to have been most humble in conversation and active in business during our absence, shall receive an ample measure of grace and recompense from God, and shall every hour be most affectionately regarded by us.

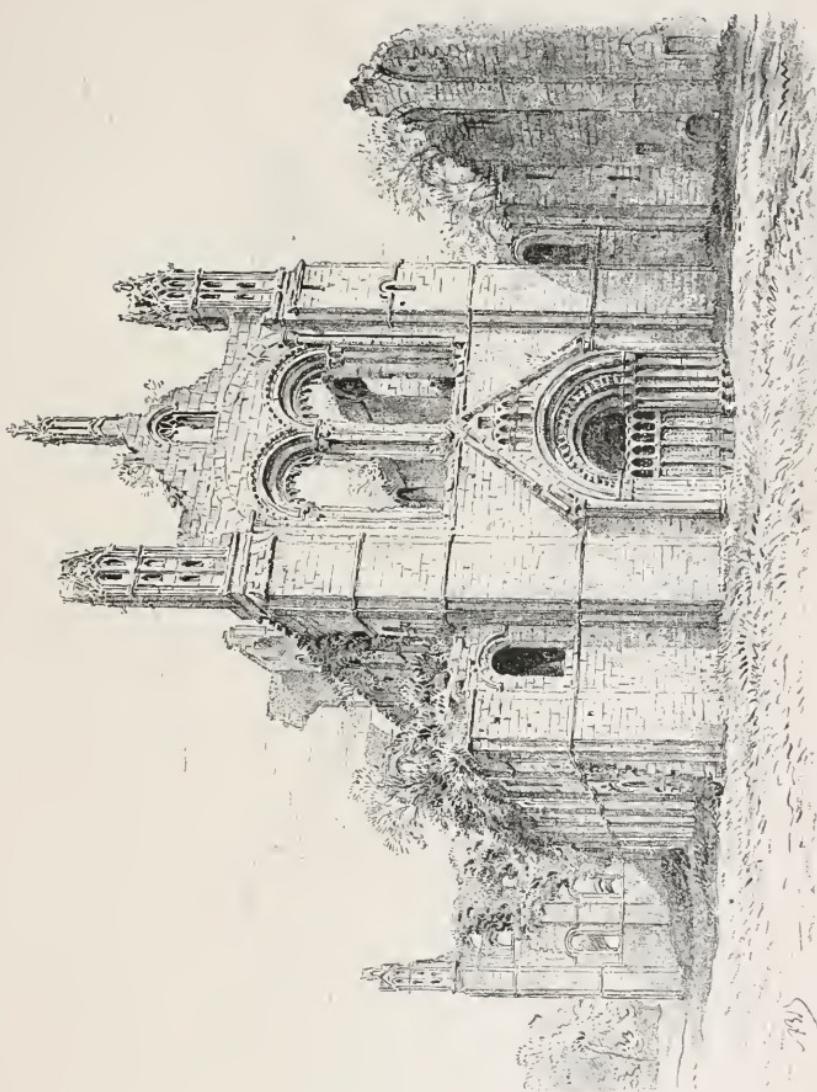
"Ye know, dearly beloved, that worldly occupations such as we have long been entangled in for your sakes, are not without danger to the soul. But we derive great hopes from your compassion, seeing that we aim at no earthly advantage, nor consume the revenues of the monastery without cause. We commend you again to God and the Blessed Virgin."

John Ripeley, twenty-seventh and last Abbot of Kirkstall, to whom fell, in November 1540, the detested task of surrendering his monastery to the Crown, is said to have been unable to tear himself

from the scene, and to have lingered out his remaining days in the Gatehouse. The room in which, according to this tradition, his last moments must have been spent now forms part of a private house, and the arches of the actual gateway have been closed, that its vaulted roof and massive walls may be available for the purposes of an entrance-hall and dining-room.

On the whole, however, we may be thankful that the church and monastic buildings of Kirkstall have been left to the gentle iconoclasm of time and the natural beauty of decay. Wych-elms and ashes, self-sown, and sheltered by the mouldering walls, now soften and vary the general effect. Inside the church itself, and the Abbot's house, they rise unbidden and unreproved ; but above their tops and between their branches—east, west, and south—are seen the chimneys and smoke-wreaths of Leeds, and the air about them is darkened and tainted with strange fumes.¹ To the north rises the hill, and across its face winds the old approach to the Abbey, now intersected at right angles by a hard and straight new road. The names of Vesper Gate and Vespers Lane are still remembered ; but in the

¹ A clearance of trees has lately been made, under the direction of Mr. S. John Hope, for the better preservation of the buildings.



KIRKSTALL ABBEY. WESTERN FAÇADE OF THE CHURCH

trains which shriek and roar on both sides of the river no traveller needs to ask his way, or draw from old inhabitants the fading traditions of the place. We long, in vain, to be left alone with the ruin, if only for a silent half-hour, and we picture to ourselves how at night, when commerce sleeps and the pulse of industry beats feebly, the past must assert itself once more, and Kirkstall be as real as Leeds. Externally the Abbey is a singularly pure and perfect specimen of genuine Cistercian, and also of early transitional architecture. The round arch prevails throughout except where, as in the east window, later work has been substituted ; the small aisleless presbytery projects but little beyond the divided chapels of the transepts ; and the very ruins of the too ambitious tower, which fell a hundred years ago, proclaim that the foundations of the massive central pillars were never intended for so proud a burden. Neither western porch nor eastern chapel disguise the simple proportions of the original Latin cross, and the lanterns and turrets are the only additions which practically diminish the severity of the outline. On entering we find, of course, pointed arches in the nave and transepts ; but there is little beside the east windows of the presbytery and chapels that may not well have been the work of Abbot Alexander.

In the second bay of the nave—both north and south—are late and somewhat elaborate windows, inserted, doubtless, for the purpose of throwing additional light upon the altars placed against the “pulpitum,” the position of which they thus serve to mark; and here at Kirkstall, as in so many other churches, the roof has obviously been lowered, partly for economy of lead, and partly for the not unusual reason that when the ends of the rafters became rotten there was still enough sound wood for a lower pitch.

The beautiful and remarkable western façade and the north-west doorway are the remaining features of special and obvious interest in the church, but there are some points of exceptional importance in the domestic buildings, particularly the chapter-house and infirmary, on which it will hereafter be necessary to make some remarks.

VII

KIRKSTALL AND ROCHE

WALTER MAP, Archdeacon of Oxford in the time of Henry II, was a wit, and, like others of the secular clergy, a bitter enemy of all regulars, and of the Cistercians in particular. Both the wit and the bitterness may be seen in the following story :

“One day, after the King had slept in a Cistercian house, the Abbot, in the morning, showed him all its costly glories, Walter Map being in attendance. When they came to the chapter-house, ‘Sire,’ said the Abbot, ‘there is no place the devil hates so much as this. Here souls are reconciled, here our penances are performed, our offences punished.’ ‘No wonder,’ said Map, ‘that the devil hates the place where so many of his friends are whipped.’”¹

The position of the capitulum, or chapter-house, of a Cistercian monastery² is indicated usually by

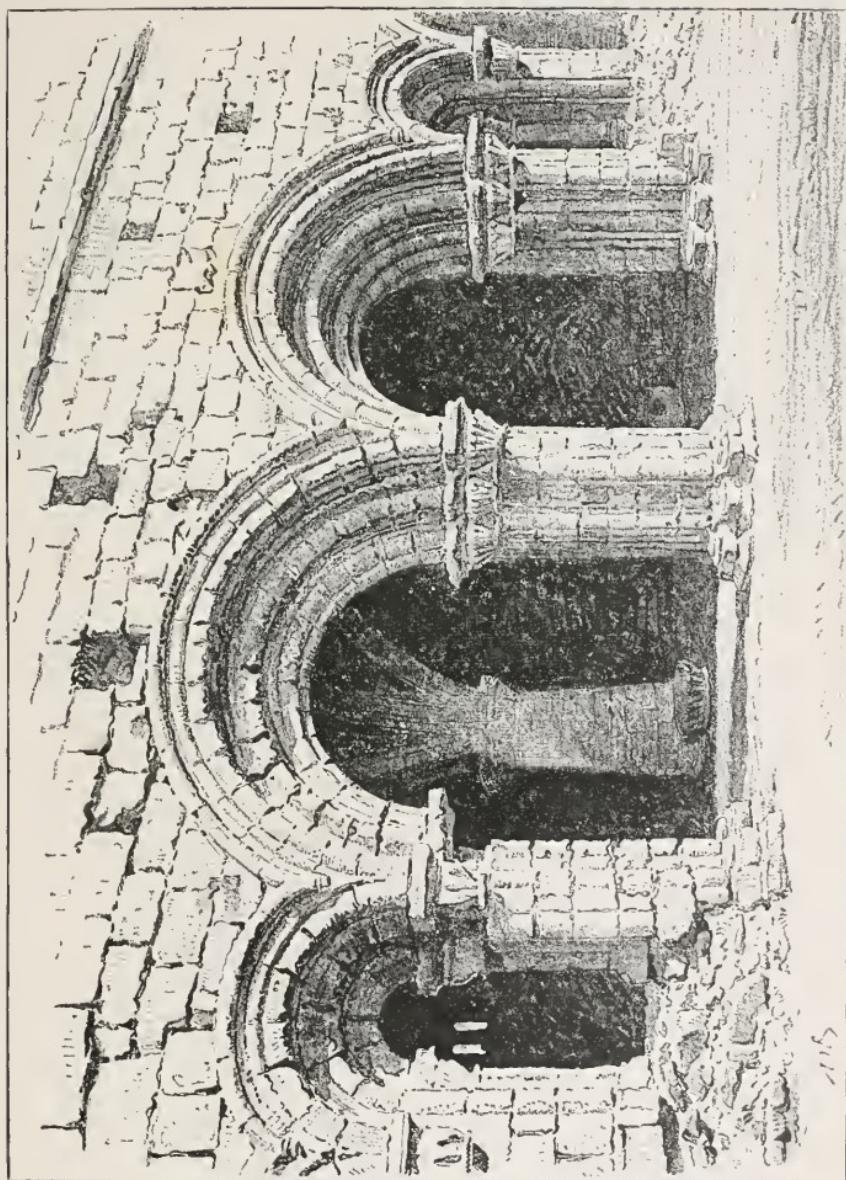
¹ Professor Morley’s *English Writers before Chaucer*.

² The accompanying plan shows the Abbey buildings, not as they are now, but as they were first laid out in conformity with the unrelaxed

three—but at Kirkstall only by two—arches, in the east walk of the cloister. It was regarded almost as a part of the church ; and therein were buried, in early days, the abbots, patrons, and benefactors of the monastery. Here, too, elections were held, and processions begun ; and here, lastly, it is certain that a very summary discipline was performed. “I am chalenged and chiden in chapter-house, as I a child were”—this, and worse than this, is the complaint of Piers Plowman’s Friar, and the monks were no better off. “After lauds we all came to receive discipline,” says Jocelyn of Brakelond in his chronicle.

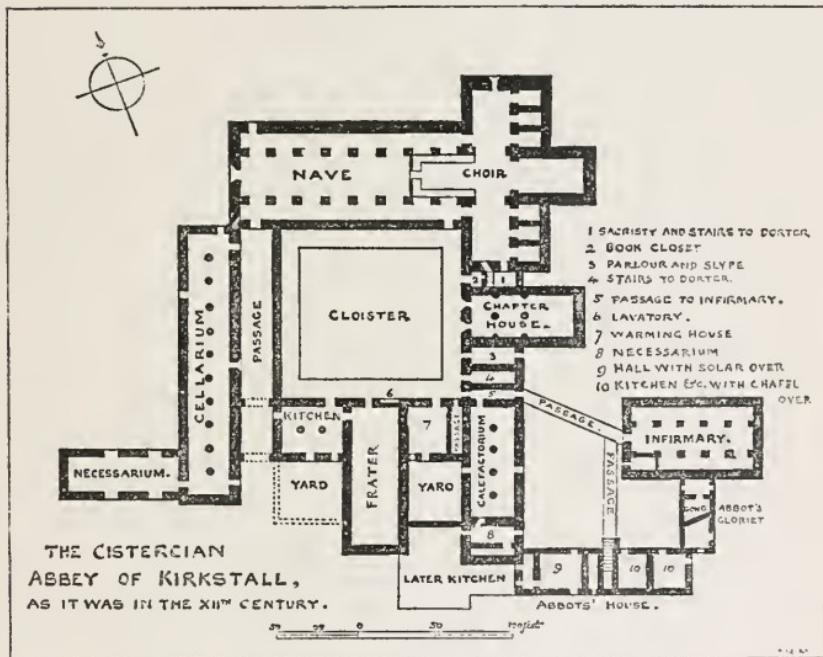
The chapter-house of Kirkstall, though neither so large nor so beautiful as that of Fountains, has a strange and somewhat weird interest of its own. The eastern half—including the whole projection beyond the east walls of the vestry, parlour, etc.—is an early fourteenth-century addition to the original work of Abbot Alexander. The difference in the filling-in of the vaulting would alone suggest this to the most careless observer, but the masonry of the walls of the latter part is still more noteworthy.

Cistercian rule. The frater is shown as it was before its enlargement, and the original kitchen in the usual position—next the frater, and close against the cloister. The infirmary, too, is indicated as it was originally built, with aisles and open arcades, before the later division into many small rooms.



ENTRANCE TO THE CHAPTER-HOUSE, KIRKSTALL ABBEY

These are literally built, to a great extent, of stone coffins, some of which have been filled up, while others are proved by various holes and fractures to be hollow. It is by no means surprising to find here and there in buildings of this period a sculp-



tured coffin-lid unceremoniously worked in, but this wholesale and unblushing confiscation of the property of the dead is surely without parallel.

The present solid and windowless eastern wall is an obviously late substitution for one pierced by two apertures, set in deeply recessed arches.

The changes and additions which have metamorphosed the frater are somewhat more obscure. But it may be safely affirmed that the original hall cannot, as has been sometimes stated, have run east and west, because this would have been an intolerable breach of Cistercian uniformity. Neither can the calefactorium, or common warming-house, have been west of the frater—the obvious situation for the kitchen. What has happened to the frater is in reality this. Originally it was perfectly normal. Then it was divided into two stories, of which the lower was used as a misericorde.¹ The new kitchen to the south of the open yard, or garth, was the natural accompaniment of this alteration.

Between the cellarum and the west walk of the cloister was a wide passage communicating directly with the church, and used, no doubt, by the *conversi*, whose intercourse with the outer world was necessarily more frequent than that of the *fratres clerici*. Similar passages exist at Beaulieu and Byland.² The arrangement seems to have been adopted from the original houses of Citeaux and Clairvaux.

¹ See Mr. S. John Hope's "Report," which has been confirmed by recent excavation.

² Mr. Hope has also found evidence of the original existence of one at Fountains.

But it is time to say a few words about the infirmary, or, to use the monk's own name for it, "farmery." This was the building which it was the habit of the Cistercians to erect last of all; and it was also the one in respect of which their usage underwent the most important change. The infirmary was not only the temporary refuge of the sick, but the permanent home of the old and feeble. The Cistercians differed from the unreformed Benedictines in demanding that the infirm should, as long as possible, continue to attend the services in the church, and they naturally attached less importance to the Infirmary Chapel; but we should have expected to find it, as in the Benedictine plan, under the same roof, and in direct communication with the main building, if only for the sake of those who were absolutely disabled. This, however, was not the case, and hence, probably, the failure of antiquaries, until very lately, to identify the infirmary at all. But at Kirkstall, as well as at Fountains, there is evidence of a process of change and development in the building at the extreme east so long known as the Abbot's Hall, precisely analogous to that which is known to have taken place in many Benedictine infirmaries. In both cases we start with a large hall, divided by columns into the semblance of a nave and

aisles,¹ and in both there seems to have been, as early as the fourteenth century, an effort to make things more comfortable by partitioning off these aisles and dividing them into separate living rooms. At Fountains, not only this hall, but the chapel and kitchen to the east of it, can be clearly traced, as well as a smaller hall communicating by a private staircase with the chapel, and very probably inhabited by the "Pater Abbas," on his visitations, when he is known to have lodged in the Infirmary.

This system of visitation was, as has been explained in a former chapter, a special feature of the Cistercian "Carta Caritatis," promulgated by Stephen Harding in 1119. Not the more, but perhaps all the less, on this account does it escape the pitiless mockery of Walter Mapes. "When the 'Pater Abbas,'" he says, in one of his poems, "proposes to visit his daughter (*i.e.* a daughter-house of the order), he takes care to give ample notice, and then there is a running to meet him with bread and wine and fish. He is conducted into a building strewn with rushes and flowers, the cloth is laid, and, having washed his hands, he reclines at the table. It is a day of no small expense. Then, to begin his inspection he rides to the Abbey, he enters the infirmary,

¹ *Vide* plan.



KIRKSTALL ABBEY. FROM THE SOUTH-EAST

—that is the object of his first visit, and there he partakes of food. As for the poverty of the cloister, he neither experiences it nor troubles his head about it." Nay, "the holy father, who has been prescribing a rule of life for the brethren, shortly proceeds to destroy with his own sharp teeth and stomach the commandment as to not eating flesh which he has enjoined."¹

The Abbeys of St. Mary at Kirkstall and St. Mary of Roche (*Sanctæ Mariæ de Rupe*) mutually illustrate each other; and, in fact, it is only by an examination of the singularly perfect remains of the first that we are enabled to eke out the slender materials for an imaginary reconstruction of the last. The resemblance in style between the two is very obvious, and has been frequently noticed by architects

¹ *Vide Poems of Walter Mapes*, Camden Society, pp. 185, 186; and *MS. Arundel*, No. 139, fol. 49, 1^o.

"Venienti occurritur
cum pane, vino, piscibus ;
in domum introducitur
stratam juncis et floribus ;
mensali mensa tegitur,
discubbit lotis manibus ;
dies ista deducitur
non absque magnis sumptibus.

"Hinc facturus scrutiniam
ad abbatiam equitat ;
intrat infirmitorium,

illud in primis visitat ;
ibi sumit edulium,
ibi libenter habitat ;
paupertatem claustralium
nec sentit nec recogitat.
• • • • •
"Pater sanctus qui fratibus
vivendi normam posuit,
mox legem quam de carnibus
non comedendis statuit
suis acutis dentibus
et suo ventre destruit."

and antiquaries. Though the foundation-deeds of Roche, unfortunately, bear no date, the tradition which points to 1147 is confirmed by internal evidence; and the only difficulty is to account for the close correspondence of the contemporary work at Kirkstall without adopting the untenable hypothesis of a common architect. It is certain, however, that the abbeys of the twelfth century were not built by architects, in our sense of the word, at all. As Mr. William Morris (*Lectures on Art*) has well said, it was not by "the great architect carefully kept for the purpose and guarded from the common troubles of common men" that the treasures of medieval architecture were designed and ornamented, but "sometimes, perhaps, it was the monk, the ploughman's brother; oftenest his other brother, the village carpenter, smith, mason, what not—a common fellow, whose common everyday labour fashioned works which are to-day the wonder and despair of many a hard-working 'cultivated architect.'" "So you see," he adds, "there was much going on to make life endurable in those times. Not every day, you may be sure, was a day of slaughter and tumult, though the histories read almost as if it were so; but every day the hammer chinked on the anvil, and the chisel played about the oak beam, and never

without some beauty and invention being born of it, and consequently some human happiness."

Now while Abbot Alexander and his monks were busy at Kirkstall they can hardly have been at work at Roche ; and since the separation of the head that plans from the hand that executes was then unknown, we can only find in these twin abbeys a remarkable illustration of the uniformity of contemporary Cistercian work. No picturesque details of the founding of Roche Abbey have come down to us, and it was not even known till comparatively lately from what parent house it was colonised.¹ But the thirteenth century chronicle of Hugh de Kirkstall, already referred to in connection with Fountains, must be considered to have settled this question.

Newminster, itself re-founded by a colony from Fountains, "rivalled the fruitfulness of its mother. It conceived and brought forth three daughters, Pipewell, Sawley, and Roche."

From Newminster, then, came the men ; and the dateless charters will tell us from whence came the land for the monastery of St. Mary of the Rock. From these we learn that Richard de Busli, lord of Maltby, and Richard the son of Turgis, called also

¹ In Hunter's *South Yorkshire* we are told that it is uncertain whether Roche was founded from Fountains, Rievaulx, or the continent.

Richard de Wickersley, lord of Hooton, each gave certain lands, agreeing to be called joint founders of the monastery. The monks, with whom rested the choice of a site, decided in favour of the Maltby side of the stream, and there accordingly they settled. The history of the monastery was not eventful. John de Busli, confirming the grants of Richard, his father, reserves the aerie of sparrow-hawks—*eria sperueriorum*; and Hunter (*South Yorkshire*) points out that the tenure of Bawtry was by the render of a sparrow-hawk yearly from the De Buslis to the Fossards. At the same time, the monks obtain liberty to make a ditch, bounding their fields between the wood of Maltby and the fields of Sandbeck, leaving, however, two roads, viz. Bolgate and the road to Blithe.

In 1319, the Abbot and convent of "St. Mary-at-St. Edward's Place," Netley,¹ of the Cistercian order, sell all their rights in the manor of Laughton to the monks of Roche. In the seventh year of Innocent VI (1361), complaints about the monks and *conversi* of Roche seem to have reached the ears of the Cardinal Priest of St. Mark, and he instructs the Abbot that if he shall find his brethren guilty of laying violent

¹ The double dedication of a Cistercian house, viz. to St. Edward as well as to St. Mary, is noticeable.



KIRKSTALL ABBEY ABOUT 1794. From a Sketch by Thomas Girtin.

hands on each other, or on the secular clergy ; of carrying arms ; playing at dice and other unlawful games ; frequenting taverns, gardens, vineyards, meadows, cornfields, and other forbidden and improper places ; leaving off their proper habit ; refusing obedience to their superiors and conspiring against them ; going out of the monastery and its precincts without leave ; associating with the excommunicated and celebrating the divine offices in their presence, etc. etc. ; he is to absolve them of all their crimes except such as ought to be reported to the Apostolic See.

About the middle of the same century, the number of monks at Roche had become so small that John, Earl of Warren, in granting to the monastery the church of Hatfield, gives as his reason that he could not but remark how few were the monks compared with the magnificence of the stonework of the Abbey. His gift is, therefore, intended to support thirteen additional monks "of respectable life and competent literature." When, on 23d June 1539, Abbot Henry Cundel surrendered the monastery to the emissaries of Henry VIII, he was joined in the deed by seventeen monks, each of whom afterwards received a pension of £6 a year, while one of £33:6:8 was allotted to the Abbot.

Of the meaning and origin of the name Roche Abbey there has never been any question. The "compendium of the discoveries made by Dr. Legh and Dr. Layton in the visitation of the Royal Province of York, etc., in the time of Henry VIII," specifies, under the head of "Superstition," that "Pilgrimage is made hither to an image of the crucifix, found (as it is believed) on a rock, and is held in veneration." No vestige of this curiosity can now be traced in the face of the limestone, and it may be assumed that the visitors, in accordance with their general instructions, destroyed the dangerous symbol. The rock, however, has enjoyed a permanent if less exalted fame as excellent building material; and the Roche Abbey quarries, besides being honourably mentioned in the competitions for St. Paul's Cathedral and the new Palace of Westminster, have supplied stone for no small proportion of the Yorkshire churches.

History has no more important lesson to teach us than its own continuity; and the fact that the present is the child of the past and the parent of the future, has burst upon the minds of some modern thinkers with the force of a religion. It is good, indeed, for men and nations to sober the days of sunshine and cheer the nights of gloom by the

powers of retrospect and forecast, and to recognise, in much that to them is smooth and easy, and full of rest and peace, the outcome of another's conflict and reaping of his toil.

“So we inherit that sweet purity
For which they struggled, groaned, and agonised.”

Scanty as are the ruins which now nestle in the green and flower-strewn valley at Roche, they still plead the cause of the past and protest against oblivion.

“The wayfarer from Sheffield,” says a recent writer, “cannot fail to remark that, as he approaches the Abbey, the face of the country is entirely changed. The red-tiled cottages, the roses with which they are entwined, the rich pastures and the marks of high cultivation which meet the eye on every side, bear witness, not only to the excellence of the soil and the care of a noble landlord, but also to the work and taste of those untiring men who, in the early periods of our history, were the pioneers of all the peaceful arts, and who have left the impress of their refinement on the places where they dwelt.”¹

To destroy this continuity and obliterate this record, was the special function of the landscape-gardening of the eighteenth century.

The traveller of to-day will not expect to find the “very fair builded house all of freestone and every

¹ *Charters of Roche Abbey.* By Sidney Oldall Addy, M.A. Sheffield, 1878.

house vaulted with freestone and covered with lead," described by one Cuthbert Sherebrook; but even the "venerable chasm and solemn thicket" visited by Walpole in 1772, and pronounced by him "so overgrown that when one finds the spot one can scarce find the ruins," must have been preferable to the wholesale pulling down and covering up which, under the auspices of "Capability Brown," almost immediately followed.

It is plain that the rock was no mere excuse for a name, but a feature of real importance in the site; for a little consideration will show that it must have almost touched, and very considerably darkened, the north transept of the church. Yet the winding valley, with its gentler southern slopes, its woods and running stream, was doubtless soon converted into a pleasant seclusion; and the natural features of the scene are, in themselves, little inferior to those of Fountains. But, alas for the antiquary who dreams of finding here rich treasures of monastic ruin! A gatehouse of comparatively late date, and parts of the choir and transepts of the church, are all, or nearly all, that remain, where once was a church at least 200 feet long by 100 feet broad (at the transepts), and a cloister-court, 180 feet by 125 feet, surrounded with stately halls and buildings of stone.

Here, as at Kirkstall, the nave had eight bays ; but the total length of the latter was greater by 20 feet, and its width by 18 feet at the transept ; though in breadth of nave and aisles there is only a difference of a few feet. The transepts at Roche had each two eastern chapels in place of the three which we have seen at Kirkstall ; but in one respect it is probable that Roche was the more magnificent of the two. Neither the nave nor, it is supposed, the tower or transepts of Kirkstall were vaulted ; but at Roche the tower and transepts were, and the nave may well have been. On the south side of the presbytery, which was only 37 feet long, are three sedilia under canopies of later date, and on the north are the remains of a rich and lofty decorated canopy. The windows of the presbytery were round-headed ; and on the south side of the south chapel a round-arched window still exists, and beneath it a piscina, also round-arched ; but at the east of the chapels larger windows were substituted in the fourteenth century.

The arches of the triforium were pointed, but those of the clerestory round, according to the usage of the Cistercian Transition. Whether the apportionment of round and pointed arches was strictly and exclusively guided by structural considerations, or

whether there was any theoretical objection to the adoption, for external use, of the newer style, seems to me a little uncertain. Perhaps, while the builder's needs and instincts were driving the Cistercian to adopt, for vaulting and other internal purposes, the more scientific construction, his conservatism as an ecclesiastical architect made it hard to shake himself free from the tradition of external symmetry and seemliness.

The monastic buildings at Roche seemed to have crossed or overhung the stream at three points at least, and in this respect, among others, the situation may be compared with that of Fountains.

Some distance due east of the kitchen-garth the stream, which here takes a north or north-east direction, has been diverted through a long range of buildings, of the end of which, commonly called the mill, considerable remains still exist. There is good reason to think that we have here the ruins of the infirmary. Not, however, till the "covering up" of the landscape-gardener is cancelled by the spade of the excavator,¹ can we hope fully to repair, even in imagination, the "pulling down" for which, alas! no real remedy is to be found. Then, and not till then, may we realise the work that, thanks to the monks

¹ It is satisfactory to learn that this is now (1890) being done.

of Newminster and the lords of Maltby and Hooton, was done in this valley in the "troublous times of



ROCHE ABBEY

anguish and rebuke," and dream that we see beneath the shadow of the venerated rock the majestic neighbour with which for centuries Maltby was

familiar. Meanwhile, though there is neither speech nor language, the past is not silent, but along the ages, in a continuity that refuses to be broken, one day telleth another and one night certifieth another, and even here, from the grave of "lost causes, and forsaken beliefs, and unpopular names, and impossible loyalties," there rises among common things and modern men a presence as of Lazarus, solemn with memories of death, and dazed with glimpses of eternity.

VIII

JERVAULX

AT the head of Wensleydale, and eastward of the little town of Hawes, rises the Yore. The torrents from the neighbouring fells are the nursing-mothers of the infant stream in whose breast is to be mirrored so much of romance, of history, and of religion. Changeful and petulant—a rill in the drought, a river after rain—it passes from the broad-based hills and quiet moors to a richer and a tamer land, till at last it is mated with the Swale at Borobridge, and in the dignified importance of the Ouse we forget the wild wanderings of the unwedded Yore. But meanwhile many a lonely force has lashed and swelled the stream, and many an unforgotten scene has been enacted on its bank. At Bolton Castle the tears of Mary Queen of Scots have fed it, and at Middleham it has quenched the thirst of the King-maker.

Below this "middle" dwelling, between Aysgarth and Masham, there has come in from Coverdale the little stream that gave its name to Coverham Abbey and to Miles Coverdale, the forerunner of our modern "Revisers."

And again, a little lower, at the point where Wensleydale proper is said to end, the monks of Jervaulx watered their famous horses at the Yore and pastured them in the rich meadows at its side. Thenceforth the valley widens and the hills subside, but still the wooded banks of Clifton and the purple of the more distant Swinton Moors lend fresh beauties to its course, and far away beyond Masham, and Tanfield, and Norton-Conyers, our interest is revived by the ancient town and minster of Ripon.

To-day, however, it is neither at Bolton nor at Ripon that we must pause, but at Jervaulx. There we shall find yet one more of the Cistercian houses of Yorkshire—one more witness to the vast wealth, and toil, and skill that Yorkshiremen once lavished on efforts and ideals which even history has almost learnt to forget.

There is a curious book published at Dijon, under the title of *Les Monuments Primitifs de la Règle Cistercienne*. These Monuments consist, in fact, of

the “Regula” of St. Benedict and the “Carta Caritatis,” “Consuetudines,” and “Kalendarium” of the Cistercian order. Like those other Monuments which, with the help of Mr. Brunet-Debaines, we have been considering, they have little meaning for the passing stranger ; but, like them, they hold the key to a long-locked past, and will yield to seeing eyes and hearing ears true glimpses and a living voice. In book and building, in life and architecture, we shall be struck by the close linking of the domestic and the ecclesiastical ; but here the resemblance ceases. The religious life—so taught the monks—demands the whole man and all his steps and phases to the grave and beyond it. Of a common and daily eating and drinking, and doing all to the glory of God ; of a religion of the body which can ennoble even the “base necessities” of flesh and blood, they could not conceive ; nor could they reach to the full meaning of a labour which is prayer, and a suffering which is better still ; but they knew that a jealous God would have all or nothing, and they patiently made rules for those incidents of mortality from which they could not escape, minutely stamping with repression and contempt so much of man as there was no room for in their philosophy. In monastic architecture, on the contrary, all is seemly and noble. The mingling

of rules for vigils, or for vespers, with those for cooking and dining ; of instructions for periodical shaving and blood-letting with orders for extreme unction and masses for the dead—all this has its counterpart in the imperceptible transition from church and chapter-house to hall and lavatory, and the common use of the cloister as at once the vestibule to the church and the home of the monks. Between massive pillars and through deep-splayed doors we catch glimpses of stairs, of aumbreys, of the book-case, or “armarium commune”—the signs and symbols of the life of man ; and the solemn vaulting of aisle and cloister becomes half domestic as it leads on the sight to passages and nooks, and gleamings of a bold, intruding sun. But the contrast which is so marked in the book is altogether absent from the building. We do not pass from vaulted aisles to sheds and hovels. In stone halls, as seemly as the builders’ art could make them, were the poor, hungry bodies fed and the weary limbs laid to sleep ; the very kitchens were massive and picturesque, and wise design and honest work were not thought out of place in even humbler offices.

And this, which adds so greatly to the beauty and interest of monastic ruins, might easily lead us into hopelessly wrong imaginings of monkish life if

we had not other records to check and guide us. From these we learn what coarse and humble fare was served from the vast kitchen to the noble hall, and what scanty and comfortless sleep was permitted in the imposing length of the well-built dormitory. Of the sleeping accommodation of the unreformed Benedictines we have the following description in the *Rites of Durham*:

“A faire large house, where all the monnks and the novices did lye, every monncke having a little chamber of wainscott, verie close, severall by themselves, and the wyndowes towardes the cloyster, every wyndowe serving for one chambere, by reasonne the particion betwixt every chamber was close wainscotted one from another, and in every of there wyndowes a deske to supporte there bookes for there studdie. In the west syde of the said dorter was the like chambers, and in like sort placed with their wyndowes and desks towards the Fermery and the water, the chambers being all well boarded under foute. The novices had theire chambers severall by himselfe in the south end of the said dorter, adjoyning to the foresaid chambers, having eight chambers on either side, every novice his chamber severall to himself, not so close nor so warme as the other chambers, nor having any light but what came in at the foreside of their chambers, being all close both above and on either side. In either end of the said Dorts was a foursquare stone, wherein was a dozen cressets wrought in either stone, being ever filled and supplied by the cooke as they needed to give light to the moncks and novices when they rose to their mattins at midnight and for there other necessarye uses.”

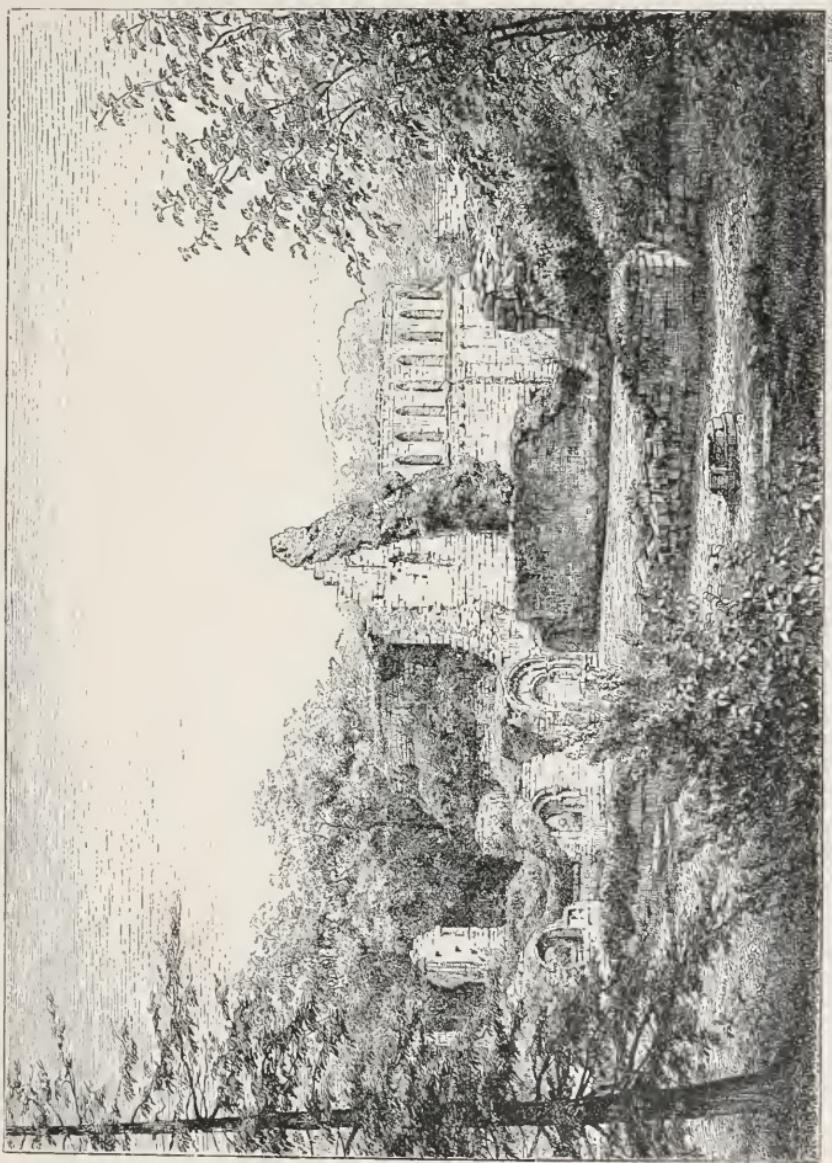
But from this type the Cistercian dormitory must in many respects have diverged. In the first place,

they were not a literary order, and the special arrangements for books and desk may well have been dispensed with. But from No. 72 of the "Consuetudines" other differences may with certainty be inferred. The partitions of "wainscott," for instance, cannot have existed, since it is ordered that, "in dressing and undressing, they are to be careful and seemly, lest they should appear naked;" and there is a further curious direction as to the precise manner in which they are to get into bed.¹

As we stand thus among the ruins of Jervaulx, with the Dijon book in our hands for reference and comment, the abbot, prior, cellarius, portarius, sacrista, monks, lay brothers, hired servants, all become real to us: the white procession forms in the chapter-house, or streams at night from the dimly-lighted dormitory into the solemn church, or in the cloisters we see brother washing the feet of brother or shaving his beard and tonsure,² or all together sit and wait for the welcome knocking by which the prior or his deputy summons them to the refectory.

¹ "Nullus in lecto ascendat rectus; sed de sponda divertat pedes in ipsum lectum."

² This last office was not to be performed without special invitation. The rule is so curious that I am tempted to quote it. ("Consuetudines," lxxxv. "De Rasuris.") "Infra sex dies ante nativitatem domini, quinquagesimam, pascha, pentecosten, festum beate marie magdalene,



JERVAULX ABBEY

And so beneath the veil of seeming uniformity the human forms and individual hearts begin to assert themselves ; and one cowled figure is known as a repentant libertine, another as an innocent and childlike dreamer, and a third as a fierce old warrior with battered body and bloodstained soul. Yet for all there is one system, one garb, one standard, one relentless round of discipline and prayer.

“It is good for us to be here,” said St. Bernard, “for here a man lives more purely, falls more rarely, rises more quickly, walks more heedfully, rests more safely, dies more happily, is cleansed (in Purgatory) more speedily, is rewarded more abundantly.” And what St. Bernard said must surely be true, whether for soldier, libertine, or saint.

But there came a time when the voice of the “Doctor Mellifluus” ceased to charm, and another spirit had the mastery in England. On the 8th of June 1537 one Arthur Darcy wrote as follows :

nativitatem sancte marie solemnitatem omnium sanctorum, tondendi et radendi sunt fratres. Coci calefaciant et deferant aquam in claustrum. Pectines, forcipes, rasoria et affilatorias custos eorum acuet et preparet. Fratres tondeant quibus jusserit Abbas. Tonsi alterutrum radant, et in claustro, præter infirmos qui infirmitorio sunt. Rasura corone fiat non exigua tonsura per desuper aures. *Nullus nisi invitatus aliquem radere presumat*, vel se velle facere signet. Nullus vero invitatus audeat refutare. Signum autem radandi alter alteri non faciat, nisi post tabulam pulsatam.”

"Ytt shall like your honorable lordship to be advertysed, ytt I was wt my lord lewtenant at ye suppression of Gervaix; wch howse wtin the gate is covered holly wt leadds, and her is one of the fayrest chyrches yt I have seen, fayre medowe, and ye ryver running by yt, and a great demayn. The Kyng's hyenes is att great charge with his stoods of mares at Thornbury and other places, whych are fyne grounds, and I thinke yt at Gervaix and the graynges incident, with the help of ther gret hardy commons, ye Kyn's hyenes, by good ouer-seers, shold have ther the most best race that shold be in England, hard and sownd of kynd, for surely the breed of Gervaix for hors was the trydd breed in the north. Ye stallyons and mares well sortyd, I thinke in no realme shold be found the lyke to them: for ther is hardy and good hye growndes for the summer and in wynter woodes and lowe growndes to fire them. My lord, by my lord lewtenant, I have restitutyon off a grett part of my goods at Coverham. From Gervaix I went to Sallay," etc. etc.

It was in the "hardy and hye growndes" at Fors, near Murbeck, that the monks of Jervaulx were first established, and they had then no "woodes and lowe growndes," for the winter. The place was afterwards known as the "Dale Grange" and the "Grange;" and the historian of Richmondshire tells us that, some recent alterations having been made in a barn, he discovered "one round-headed light, a genuine remnant of the original building," and that there still remained in the wall a single trefoil window, from which he inferred that the monks of Jervaulx, out of reverence for the place of their origin, maintained a



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small cell on the site long after their removal to more fertile and more sheltered scenes. How and whence the monks arrived at Fors is recorded at somewhat tedious length in the Byland Register. The story is briefly as follows :

In the reign of Stephen one Akar Fitz-Bardolph, a feudatory of Alan, Count of Brittany and Earl of Richmond, of whom he held vast estates in Yorkshire, gave to one Peter de Quincy, serving God as a monk and being withal a skilful leech, and to certain other monks from Savigny, a parcel of land in Wandesleydale.

Farther back than this we cannot go. No one seems to be able to tell us how Peter de Quincy and his brethren came to be in England at all, or how they became acquainted with Akar Fitz-Bardolph, or whether the said Peter had earned the gratitude of his patron, like a hero of *The Arabian Nights*, by his skill in medicine. At any rate we first come upon the monks as they are engaged in raising a simple and unpretentious building, which they call first the Fors Abbey, then Wandesleydale, then the Abbey of Charity, and finally, "appropriately to the running waters and the situation," Joreval — the Abbey of the Vale of Ure or Yore. Two things, however, hampered and distressed the monks in their

new settlement. First, there was the difficulty of securing for themselves a recognised status in the Cistercian system ; and secondly, there were serious drawbacks to the site.

"The situation," says Whitaker, "was unpromising, high in the valley, cold and exposed to fogs, and, therefore, though not unfit for pasturage, ill adapted to the ripening even of barley and oats, for wheat was then rarely cultivated even in the low districts north of the Trent." This latter evil was ultimately remedied by Alan, Count of Richmond, and his son Conan, who, besides confirming the original grants of Fitz-Bardolph, bestowed on the monks of Jervaulx, first, "a great pasture of Wandesleydale," and then a "vast uncultivated tract." Both father and son, in fact, took a warm interest in the monastery, and the former expressly commanded Brother Peter to let him know when he was about to begin building operations, that he might himself be there to see.

Accordingly, when all was ready, Peter made his way to the Count, who, coming to the scene of action, called by name upon four or five of the knights who accompanied him, and said with a pleasant smile, as one in sport, "We have all wide lands and great possessions ; now, therefore, let us with our own hands

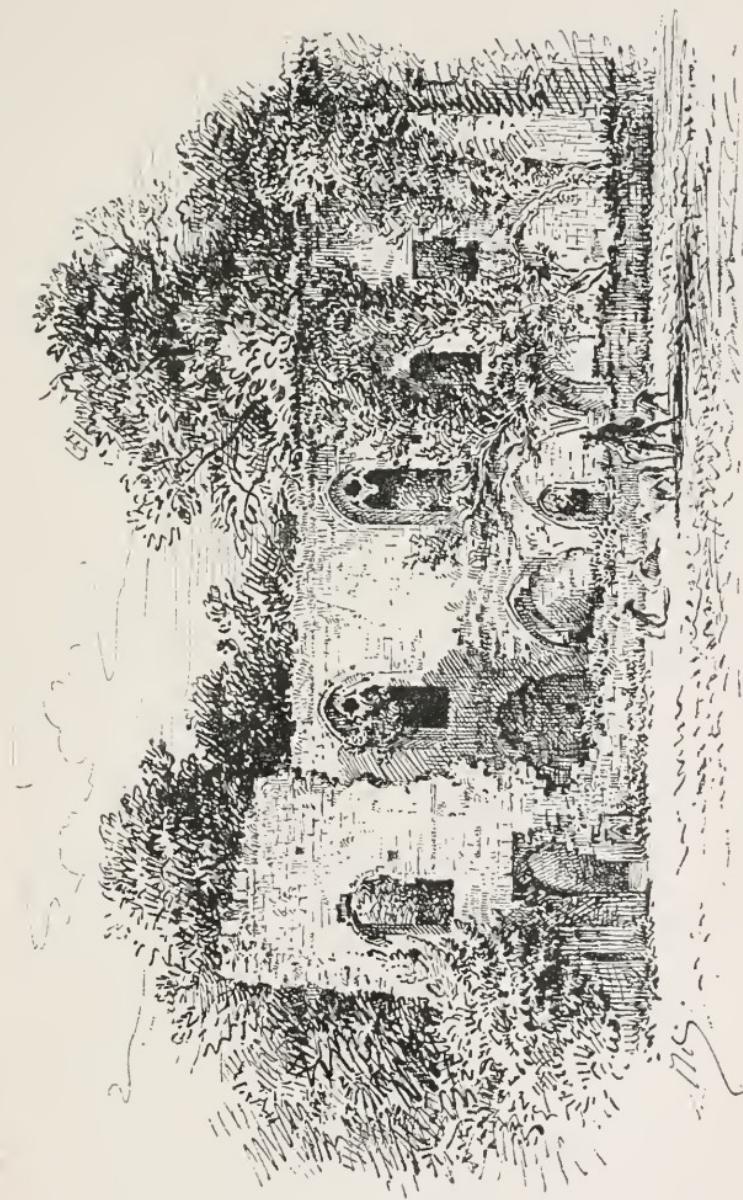
be helpers and builders of this house in the name of our Lord, and let each of us contribute land or rent for the permanent endowment¹ and support of the part which he has built."

To which hint some of them responded well enough, while others insisted upon terms and conditions. So it came to pass that the first wooden makeshift and apology for a church was run up, to wit, in the year 1145; of which, when Roger de Mowbray, the devout founder of Byland, heard, he could not be happy without a share in the prayers and spiritual benefactions of these monks of Savigny, but, with great devotion and generosity, gave the said Brother Peter, by charter, some land belonging to his domain of Masham.

Not long afterwards, Count Alan went to visit his estates in Brittany, and, coming to Savigny, told the Abbot how Peter and his companions had started a monastery near his castle of Richmond in England. The Abbot of Savigny was far from receiving this intelligence with unmixed satisfaction, and when the Count courteously made over to him the new foundation, he accepted it with undisguised reluctance and

¹ It is perhaps worth noticing that the word "eleemosyna," which I have here rather freely translated "endowment," is simply the original form of our English word "alms."

a resolve, apparently, to be rid of it at the earliest opportunity. But Peter's heart was in the matter, and he wrote again and again to entreat the Abbot to send "a convent" from Savigny, with no better result, however, than a sharp letter calling him a fool for his pains, because he had begun an abbey without the advice of the house of Savigny. For the "Pater Abbas" bethought him of the dangers, toils, and failures which had befallen his monks in different parts of England, and how he was often urged to recall them; and so he openly swore a great oath that nothing should induce him to send a convent to Jervaulx, and he wished he were well rid of Count Alan's gift. This letter vexed and discouraged Peter and his companions, but did not shake their holy purpose. At last, in the tenth or twelfth year of King Stephen—as some affirm—it happened that the Abbot of Byland went to Savigny to attend a general chapter. Peter, hearing of his intended journey, begged him to be the bearer of a letter, and to intercede personally with the Abbot of Savigny on behalf of the "new plantation." To make a long story short, the result of this appeal was that the Abbot of Quarera (or Quarr, in the Isle of Wight) was ordered to visit Fors and ascertain whether the place was really capable of supporting a monastery.



PART OF THE RUINS OF JERVAULX ABBEY

If his report was satisfactory, the new foundation was to be made over to Savigny's "younger daughter" of Byland ; if otherwise, Peter was to hold it as a sort of agent or trustee for the parent house. When Peter, in the presence of his friends, Brother Conan and Brother Himbert, and of Matthew, a monk of Savigny, opened the sealed letter which the Abbot of Quarera brought, and read these proposals, there was a brief consultation. Matthew advised that the estate was not sufficient for a monastery, and had better be handed over to Savigny, but Peter and his friends, after all they had gone through, would not hear of this. So the end of it was that they all came to the Abbots of Quarera and Byland in the church, and Peter said :

"Blessed be God, within a few years from our first establishment we have now five carucates under the plough, forty cows with their followers, sixteen mares with their foals, the gift of Earl Conan, five sows with their litters, three hundred sheep, about thirty hides in the tannery, wax and oil which will supply our lights for two years ; and I am very certain that we shall be able to raise a competent supply of ale, cheese, bread, and butter, and to sustain a regular convent out of such beginnings, until it shall please God to provide better for them."

Fuller remarks somewhere in his *Church History* that the Cistercians were rather farmers than monks. The accusation is certainly too sweeping, but it is

plain that if Peter de Quincy had not been a thrifty and practical man, Jervaulx Abbey would never have existed. Though Peter and his two brethren and one *conversus* at once "made profession" in the church, it was not till St. Bernard himself had interposed and the decree of the Chapter of Savigny had been confirmed by a council of the order at Citeaux that the arrangement was absolutely and irrevocably clenched. Roger, Abbot of Byland, did his part by summoning a chapter, and, "with a long and deep sigh," nominating John of Kinstan as abbot of the new house; whereupon the monks raised him in their arms and carried him to the high altar, saying, "Thou art Abbot of Joreval." Soon afterward, Abbot John, having been solemnly blessed after the *vigilie nocturnæ*, set forth with twelve monks for Joreval.

Of the manner of his journey, and how he "had Christ Himself for a guide," we have left ourselves but little space to discourse. As the new abbot rested the first night in a certain village, he had a dream. He thought he was once more starting from Byland, and as he left the cloister he saw in the midst of it a very noble woman in seemly raiment. In her left hand she led a beautiful boy, whose face shone like the moonlight. And the boy

gathered a fair branch from a tree in the cloister, and so vanished with the lady. By and by John and his monks found themselves in a place where they were altogether shut in with thorns and great rocks, and could neither go forward nor back. Just as they were beginning to despair, and each to call on the other for help, John said, "Let us repeat the Hours and the Gospel"; and as they finished, suddenly the lady and the boy appeared to them. And John said, "O fair lady, tender and sweet, what do you with your son here in the desert?" And she answering that she was often in desert places, after some further speech, John begged her to be a guide to him and his monks. But the lady, saying she must not then stay, commended them to her son. So the boy guided them cheerfully, having in his hand the branch he had gathered at Byland; and the monks followed him through rough and toilsome ways; and felt it not. And countless numbers of small white birds, no larger than sparrows, hovered round the branch and sang, over and over again, the hymn, "O all ye works of the Lord!" At last they came to a very rough and neglected place, and the boy went into the midst, and, planting there the branch round which the birds were singing, said, "Here, after a certain time,

shall God be worshipped and invoked." And so he vanished.

And when Abbot John awoke, the monks went on their way and passed at dawn through the midst of another village. And as the people began to peer at them from their lattices, John hid himself in the shadow to listen to their talk. And one looked at the moon and the stars, and the signs and aspects of the heavens, and said : " In a happy time do these good men make their move, for in thirty or forty years they shall be so established that they shall not afterwards be shaken, but go on growing and increasing."

Thus, in the mirror of their dreams and beliefs, may we trace some faint and shadowy reflections of the men who built for a foredoomed system such imperishable homes.

At Jervaulx, indeed, the church, the great central thought and dominant feature of the whole, has been levelled with the ground. As the children of those who slew the prophets were forward to adorn their tombs, so a later generation has come with flowers to brighten and fences to surround the limbs and remnants of a murdered art. The cloister-court of Jervaulx is now a tennis-ground, and the precinct to the north and west a garden, but the park which

spreads along the valley of the Ure still witnesses to the silent toil which cleared and cultivated the tangled wilderness. The ground-plan of the church has been carefully excavated and well preserved, and a single altar in the north transept and a fine doorway at the south-west of the nave remain *in situ* and fairly perfect. The south wall of the cloister, clearly a modern substitution, has no signs of lavatory or entrance to frater and offices. The frater has utterly vanished, the building wrongly so called being perhaps the common warming-house. East of this is another room with two large fireplaces. A kitchen, with one fireplace, is south of the yard, as at Kirkstall and Roche. There are indications of a large hospitium west of the cellarum, and ample materials for study in the infirmary and so-called Abbot's house, as well as in the chapter-house. In fact, a careful and accurate plan of this abbey, made in the full light of recent research, is sorely needed.

From the dreamer, John of Kinstan (or De Kyngeston), to Adam of Sedburgh, hanged in 1537 for complicity in the Pilgrimage of Grace, a long array of abbots maintained, in uneventful succession, the dignity of the house and the reputation of its horses and its cheese. The wooden structures at

which Peter de Quincy laboured and Count Alan jested with his friends gave way to the more solid buildings which Abbot Roger of Byland planned and set a-going between Christmas and the Purification, but thenceforth no great architect seems to have arisen at Jervaulx.

The end of the twelfth or beginning of the thirteenth century must have seen the completion of the "fair church," which Darcy so eagerly destroyed, and the chapter-house with its pillars of gray marble from Nidderdale. And here, too, ends that which may be almost called the Cistercian episode in architecture.

"The Gothic architecture," says Mr. Ruskin, "arose in massy and mountainous strength, axe-hewn and iron-bound, block heaved upon block by the monk's enthusiasm and the soldier's force; and cramped and stanchioned into such weight of grisly wall as might bury the anchorite in darkness and beat back the utmost storm of battle." It is with this stage that we are concerned rather than with that later one in which "gradually as that monkish enthusiasm became more thoughtful, and as the sound of war became more and more intermittent beyond the gates of the convent or the keep, the stone pillar grew slender and the vaulted roof grew

light, till they had wreathed themselves into the resemblance of the summer woods at their fairest ; and of the dead field-flowers, long trodden down in blood, sweet monumental statues were set to bloom for ever beneath the porch of the temple or the canopy of the tomb."

IX

MOUNT GRACE PRIORY

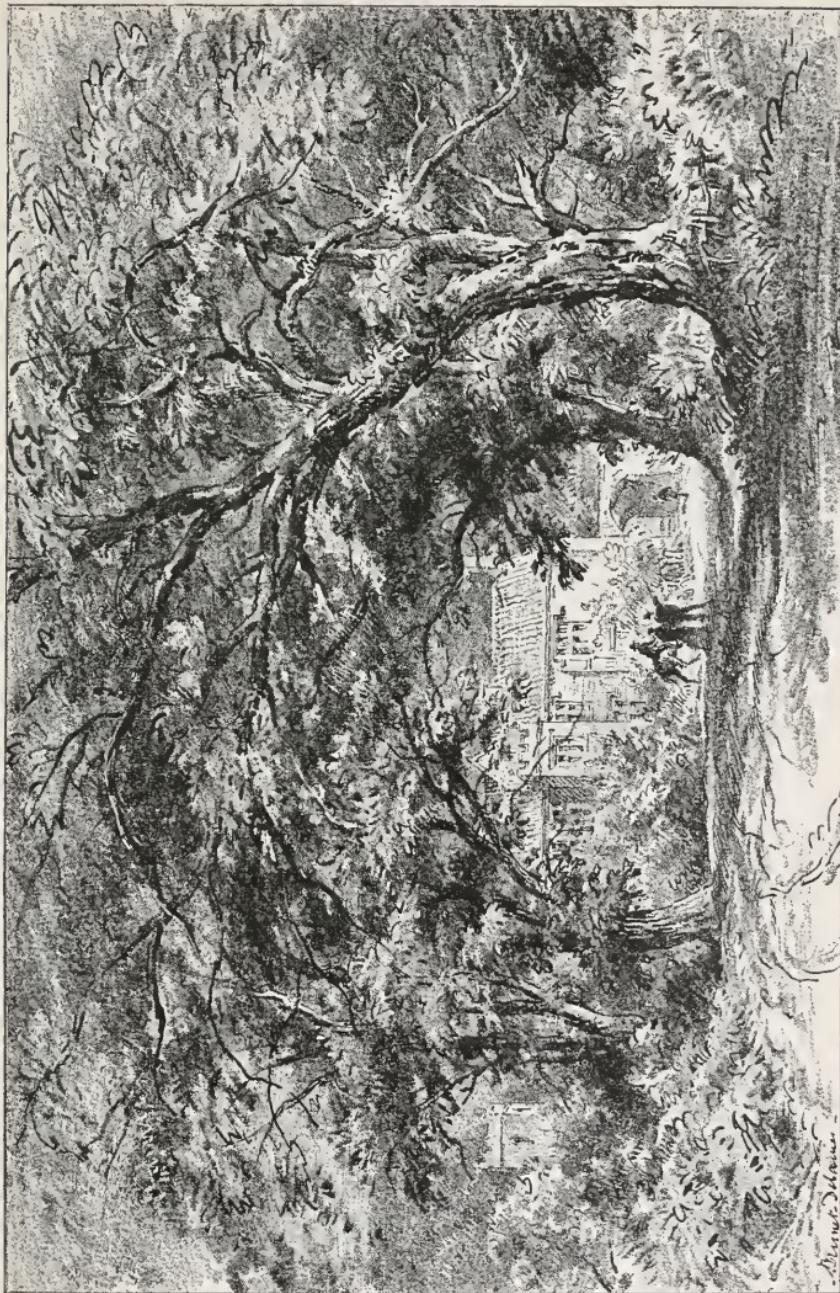
PROBABLY the least known, but certainly not the least interesting, of the monastic ruins of Yorkshire is the Carthusian Priory, which stands a mile or so north of the "Beck," between the Hambleton and Cleveland Hills. "The Priory of Mount Grace," says the local guide, "is situated about eight miles E.N.E. of Northallerton. The nearest railway stations are Welbury and Trenholme Bar, which are respectively about four miles distant, but no conveyances can be obtained at either." At one time a sportsman, at another a countrywoman, will come and go, but the few tourists who make their way to the Priory arrive mostly by road from Northallerton. Indeed, these small stations on the wild moor seem to feel the spell of older and more stagnant days, and perhaps no one who has not waited at Pilmore for a train has fully realised how powerless a railway

and even a junction, may be to enliven such an utter desolation, or disturb so deep a peace. But far more strange and impressive than the stillness which now reigns beneath the shadow of "Black Hambleton" must have been the forced and painful silence of the peopled cloister and the clustered cells which at the end of the fourteenth century testified to the devotion and liberality of Thomas Holland, Earl of Kent. Three hundred years had elapsed since Bruno promulgated in the desert of the Chartreuse a monastic reform more thorough and relentless even than that of Robert, Bernard, and Stephen Harding. The extreme austerity of the Carthusian rule had, we must suppose, left the field to the more popular Cistercians, and Witham and Henton, both in Somersetshire, were long the only houses of the order in England. But between 1344 and 1414 no less than seven Carthusian priories were founded, and among them, in 1397, "The House of Mount Grace of Ingleby," dedicated to St. Mary and St. Nicholas.

Thomas Holland was then Duke of Surrey, and the favoured and trusted nephew of the King. But when, only two years later, Richard II was deposed, the Duke became once more Earl of Kent, and the rich and powerful patron of the Carthusians was

transformed into an impotent rebel, and finally suffered as a traitor. So the "Monastery of the Assumption of Our Lady of Mount Grace," as it seems to have been mostly called, was left unfinished, and the monks uncertain as to their title to those far-off midland and southern lands at Hinchley, Warham, and Carisbrooke, which the deposed monarch had granted to his favourite. At last, however, in 1440, Henry VI confirmed the original grants, and building operations were resumed and soon completed.

"*Sanctæ et singulares*"—saintly and singular, indeed, were the observances which had won the admiration of the luckless Duke of Surrey. Not in the fast of eight months out of twelve, the refusal of meat even to the sick, the substitution of flannel for linen in bedding as well as clothes, lies the peculiar hardship of the Carthusian rule, but rather in that which the ruins now before us so vividly recall—the isolation of each monk in his own little hut and walled garden, the silence enjoined even on the stated festivals when the common refectory was used, the ingenuity of self-torture which turned at a sharp angle the aperture in the wall lest the hands or face of the bringer of the daily pittance should cheer the solitary by touch or look. Did not even



HOUSE, PARTLY 17TH CENTURY, AT THE ENTRANCE TO MOUNT GRACE PRIORY

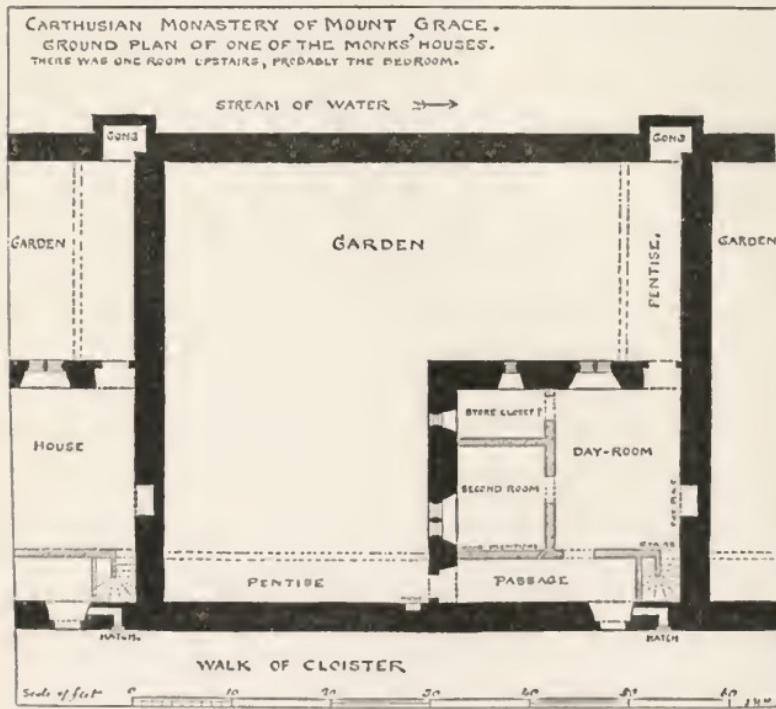
Elijah see the ravens in *his* “eremus”? Yet it was for this rule, in all its stern integrity, that the inmates of our London Charterhouse were ready to die. It is instructive to see how their extirpation by Cromwell and his master strikes a very modern historian.

“In the general relaxation of the religious life the charity and devotion of the brethren of the Charterhouse had won the reverence even of those who condemned monasticism. After a stubborn resistance, they had acknowledged the Royal Supremacy, and taken the oath of submission prescribed by the Act. But by an infamous construction of the statute, which made the denial of the Supremacy treason, the refusal of satisfactory answers to official questions as to a conscientious belief in it was held to be equivalent to open denial. The aim of the new measure was well known, and the brethren prepared to die. In the agony of waiting, enthusiasm brought its imaginative consolations: ‘When the Host was lifted up there came, as it were, a whisper of air which breathed upon our faces as we knelt; and there came a sweet, soft sound of music.’ They had not long, however, to wait. Their refusal to answer was the signal for their doom. Seven swung from the gallows; the rest were flung into Newgate, chained to posts, in a noisome dungeon, where, ‘tied and not able to stir,’ they were left to perish of gaol-fever and starvation. In a fortnight five were dead, and the rest at the point of death, ‘almost dispatched,’ Cromwell’s envoy wrote to him, ‘by the hand of God, of which, considering their behaviour, I am not sorry.’”¹

So perished, without a thought of yielding, the champions of English Carthusianism.

¹ Green’s *English People*.

Let us see what these ruins can teach us of their brethren in Cleveland. Leaving the road at right angles, we make straight for the base of the wooded hills, till our track brings us up short before a highly



picturesque but rather desolate farmhouse, in the construction of which, though an inscription over the door gives the date of 1654, the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries seem to have gone shares. Right and left stretches a long range of buildings, through which we pass by a gate-house into a large irregular-

shaped garth with some appearance of a cloister-court. On the north are the ruins of a by no means imposing church, and north of this again a doorway in a wall reveals glimpses of an inner court.

This, indeed, is the normal Carthusian plan. A church, simple and aisleless, with transepts, short nave, and more considerable choir, and on either side an enclosure; the larger, and in this case the southern, given up in part or altogether to the guest-houses and more public offices and buildings of the monastery, the smaller constituting the cloister of the monks, and surrounded with tiny two-storied houses and gardens, in front of which is a continuous "pentice."

Turning to the left on entering the outer court, and passing along the back of the range of buildings already referred to as a farmhouse, we find, in the north-west corner, an unmistakable kitchen, beyond which again are two massive buttresses against a blank wall. Eastward, and beyond the doorway to the inner cloister, we come to the nave of the church. This is so short that it forms, with the transepts and choir, a reversed Latin cross—the choir, instead of the nave, being the long arm. Immediately east of the transept are the remains of the tower, through which, by a rather narrow passage under lofty arches,

the choir is reached. The entire absence of aisles is significant of the simplicity of ritual which admitted no processions. Only the north wall of the choir remains, though there are sufficient indications of masonry on the south. East and south of the church, at a short distance, there seem to be traces of cells and gardens like those which surround the inner cloister. They were apparently four in number, two on the east, where the cells must have been, so to speak, "semi-detached," and two on the south, where the garden intervened in the more normal way. The rest of the eastern side of the court was screened from the stream and the rising hill by a wall and passage communicating with the southern hospitium.

At the north-east corner of the church was, perhaps, the chapter-house; and abutting against the north walls of the transept and nave are remains of what may, with more certainty, be called the prior's house. But the most interesting part of the monastery has yet to be noticed. On the outer side of the north wall of the prior's house is an undeniable lavatory, which, though not situated like those of the Cistercians close to the entrance of a refectory, does yet mark the fact that we are now in the cloister of the monks—the scene of their daily life and occasional ablutions. Standing



DOOR LEADING FROM THE OUTER COURT TO THE GREAT
CLOISTER AT MOUNT GRACE PRIORY

with our backs to this lavatory and looking north, we shall have, right and left, as well as in front of us, the ruins of the fourteen separate cells in each of which a monk, more eremite than coenobite, once sought to train his soul to look only towards heaven. The minuteness with which the scheme of these remarkable dwellings can be discerned is, after all, the feature of primary interest in the ruin. With the help of a very careful drawing, and some more than probable conjectures of Mr. Middleton's, we may reconstruct, almost in detail, the strange shell which the Carthusian law formed around the individuals of its species. At Burgos we may see the survivors of the race, at Grenoble we may brood over its cradle ; but neither Miraflores nor the Grande Chartreuse will wholly supersede the study of this Yorkshire ruin, where no later day has endeavoured with self-conscious art to simulate or to embalm the past.

Let us take at random a single cell.

We shall find that the allowance of space to each monk is tolerably liberal. The actual building measures, on the outside, about 25 feet by 28 feet ; and occupies, roughly speaking, a fourth part of an enclosed square, the remainder of which is devoted to garden, the house being in a corner with a frontage to the cloister, and having the garden on

two sides of it in the shape of an L. Along the remaining part of the cloister frontage there runs, inside the high wall of the garden, a passage covered with a pentice; and a similar structure connects a door at the back of the building with an aperture in the corner of the garden wall—away from the cloister and towards the stream. This aperture was once wrongly supposed to be an exit to the running water and the open country; but it is now clear that it was only a recess, connected by quite other relations with the drainage of the stream.

In its two garden frontages the house has altogether four low windows, and a door communicates with each of the above-mentioned covered passages, and another—strictly closed—with the cloister. In the corner between this last door and the return wall of the house is the hatch through which the recluse was fed. Starting in a straight line from the outer (or cloister) wall, this ingenious aperture shortly turns at right angles, and debouches in the splay of the neighbouring doorway. Towards the cloister it is still obviously rebated as for a shutter.

Immediately on the right, as you enter from the cloister, are the newel and other indications of a staircase; but, unfortunately, nothing remains to

indicate the plan of the upper floor. To the left was probably a passage leading to the front-garden door and covered way. In the latter is a niche, as if for a lamp. The inner part of the house seems to have been divided, by wooden partitions, into three rooms—perhaps bedroom,¹ day room, and a sort of pantry. One only—the supposed day room—contains a fireplace. This room also communicates with the second covered passage and the “recess.”

Such, with but little variation, are the fifteen cells and gardens which surround the monks’ cloister at Mount Grace. The enclosure is by no means rectangular, and not even an exact parallelogram. The gardens consequently differ slightly in size and shape ; that at the north-east corner, for instance, being long and having its outer angle acute. The branches of the same stream which partially surrounds the outer court, flow round three sides of the inner ; and beyond the water, to the east, rises the steep and thickly-wooded hill. It should be observed for the benefit of genuine antiquaries that on each side of the doors

¹ The analogies of Pavia and, I am told, of S. Maria degli Angeli at Rome are in favour of the upper floor being the sleeping-room of the monks. There must, however, one would think, have been more space than could be needed for this purpose. At Miraflores Mr. Street speaks of *two* rooms upstairs. Unless the lay-brothers acted as housemaids, these monks must have found themselves rather over-housed.

of the cells are, or were, escutcheons, those on the east wall being larger than those on the others. Among these larger escutcheons are the arms of Gascoigne and of Scroope, Archbishop of York. This Archbishop was of the old type of political and warlike Churchmen. Three years after the defeat and death of Hotspur, he conspired with the elder Percy against King Henry, and paid the penalty of unsuccessful rebellion. It must not be supposed either that the cells are all in equally good preservation, or that any one of them is so perfect as to exhibit every detail that has been described. It is with them as with the abbeys among which we have been travelling—what is lacking in one must be supplied from another. This, indeed, is the true secret of the antiquary's joy, and the key to his mystery. He is one of those "sad friends of truth" of whom Milton spoke, who, "imitating the careful search that Isis made for the mangled body of Osiris, went up and down gathering up limb by limb still as they could find them." He knows, too, that he "has not found them all, nor ever shall do;" but, because no living impulse or creative thought can wholly die, he still strives to register in the vast museum of human history that which has helped to mould and make us as we are.

One curious attribute or accident of the Carthusian was his devotion to gardening. A recent traveller in Spain sums up his impressions of Miraflores, with somewhat contemptuous brevity, in these words : "Every monk has a cell, a bedroom, and a garden to himself, for silence and solitary confinement are the rule of the order, instead of sociability and usefulness to their fellow-creatures. 'Mais il faut cultiver son jardin.'"¹ Yes, they were the first and greatest gardeners, but they could produce great architects and bishops too, for was not St. Hugh of Lincoln a Carthusian ? And while we wonder at the fruitless austerity of the cloister of the monks, it is but fair to remember that larger cloister through which we have so lately passed. Here, in the ample accommodation for the wayfarer, the poor, the fugitive, the sick, is the great link between the two elements of worship and service, which, from age to age in varying proportions, have been and will remain essential to religion. Still it is only too true that in the original conception of the Carthusian rule there was something of that morbid desire of isolation which was the really grave blemish of medieval monasticism. In the early anchorites this tendency was probably at its worst, in the Dominican and Franciscan ideal

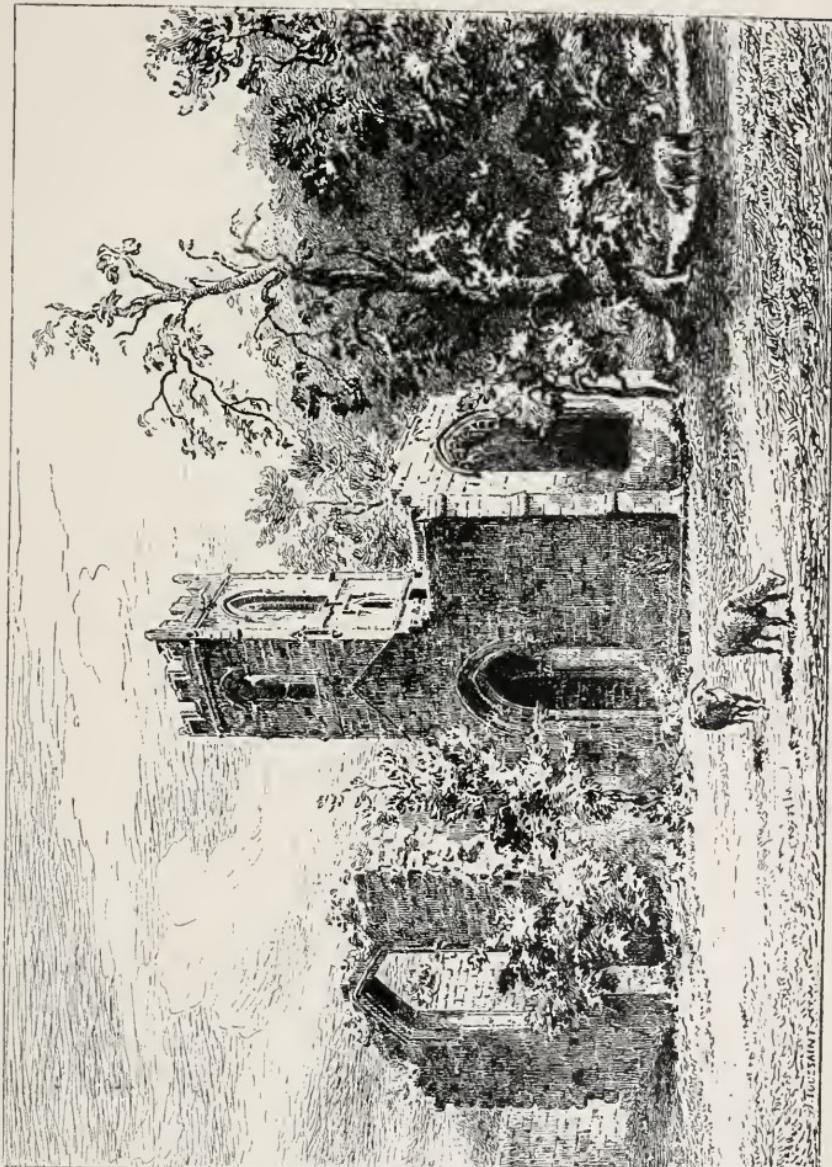
¹ *Holidays in Spain*, by F. R. M'Clintock.

it was almost wholly absent. Between the two comes the ordinary monasticism of which the Benedictines are the type. But the Carthusians were not Benedictines, though they are often spoken of as if they were, and they have in them, as we have seen, more of the hermit than of the cœnobite. Thus the salvation of their own souls was declared to be the object of their retreat, and they seem to have at first discouraged poor strangers; spending their so-called superfluities by preference on the needy of their own neighbourhood.

In the same spirit they recited the minor canonical hours each in his own cell at the sound of the chapel bell, assembling only for matins and vespers, except on feast-days, when all their services were in the church.

All the more remarkable is the appearance in politics and art of the one English Carthusian whose name still lingers in the Calendar of our Church. In that neglected and patiently protesting document the name of Hugh, Bishop of Lincoln, stands, blacklettered against the 17th November, to be read by those who never heard of Bruno or asked the meaning of the Charterhouse.

From the midst of these silent worshippers, with their one silver chalice and silver tube for eucharistic



MOUNT GRACE PRIORY

wine, their aisleless church and meagre ritual, comes forth the great Gothic builder whose monument is Lincoln Cathedral. From the midst of the petty and vexatious rules, the weekly flagellations, the system of signs—"rustic and not facetious or wanton"—in place of speech, comes the opponent of King Richard I. on behalf of the constitution and liberties of England. And the same man who said to his monks, "Eyes on your plates, hands on the table, ears to the reader, and heart to God," said to Hubert, who demanded in the King's name contributions for foreign wars, "Within the realm we of Lincoln will pay your soldiers, as we are bound; but without it, no."

Thus, as Mr. Freeman says, "as Thomas of London had withstood the demands of the father, Hugh of Avalon withstood the demands of the son;" and "the Saint of Lincoln, grown into an Englishman on English ground, spoke up for the laws and rights of Englishmen, as Anselm had done before him, and as Simon did after him." For, alas! we cannot claim St. Hugh as an Englishman by birth. It was "the saint whom the Imperial Burgundy gave to England" who spoke out in this manly English fashion, and who fixed for us the true type of English Pointed architecture. His effigy may still be seen in

Westminster Abbey, with the swan, the symbol of Carthusian loneliness.¹

The high opinion in which the Order was held by Churchmen of the twelfth century may be gathered from a letter of Peter, the venerable Abbot of Cluny, to Pope Eugenius.

"I thought," he says, "and I do not believe I was wrong, that theirs was the best of all the Latin systems, and that they were not of those who strain at a gnat and swallow a camel. For they do not consider the kingdom of God as consisting principally in meats and drinks, in garments and labours, and the like, though these, wisely managed, may do that kingdom of God good service, but in that godliness of which the Apostle says, 'Bodily exercise is profitable to little, but godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come.' These holy men feast at the table of wisdom, they are entertained at the banquet of the true Solomon, not in superstitions, not in hypocrisy, not in the leaven of malice and wickedness, but in the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."

To Mr. Matthew Arnold, whose noble poem of the Grand Chartreuse has perhaps been often in the reader's mind, it is all but one more misdirected effort, one more blind aspiration, one more fruitless rebellion against "the common." Yet for him the silence, which to many seems so monstrous and so morbid, is full of solemn meaning and eloquent with pathetic suggestion :

¹ So says Mrs. Jameson, but there is little doubt he had a real pet swan, as mentioned in the Latin Metrical Life of St. Hugh.

“Silent, while years engrave the brow ;
Silent—the best are silent now.”

The Carthusians were right, at least, to hold their peace. He sees in their isolation not the fatal flaw, but the crowning excellence, of their system. It is with them, he would perhaps say, as with the stars—“self-poised they live, nor pine with noting. All the fever of some different soul.” But surely the more availing plea is that they were never conscious traitors to their kind, but rather, in the mysterious oneness of our race and the strange fashion of its development, it was for us they tried that dark and dreadful path of silence that we, whose courage would perhaps have failed, might know, by proof of their experience, that not so is reached the land of our desire.

Who shall say that these men bore in vain all the agonies of self-repression, and the maddening consciousness of powers unemployed ; or that without them St. Vincent de Paul would have been able to write to his sisterhood in after days, “Let your monasteries be the homes of the sick, your cell a hired chamber, your chapel the parish church, your cloister the streets of the town and the wards of the hospitals, your rule obedience, your grating the fear of God, your veil a strict and holy modesty”?

X

ST. AGATHA'S AND EGGLESTON

FROM a town of singular beauty, gathered round the walls of a rock-hewn fortress that frowns above a swift and shallow stream, we wander pleasantly through a mile or two of wood and meadow to the ruins of a House of Premonstratensian Canons. So much have St. Agatha's and Eggleston in common that our description thus far may stand as well for one as for the other. Yet the foundations are in reality quite unlike enough to be instructive comments on each other, and even a hasty and careless observer will find in them more of contrast than of sameness.

Before entering into details it will be well to attach some meaning to the words we have already used. Briefly, very briefly, what are Premonstratensian Canons? There is a rule enunciated by a synod of about the year 1083 that no abbot or monk shall recall any one from the profession of canon to

that of monk as long as such canon can find a church of his own order. And Pope Urban II—*mandavit et universaliter interdixit*—made a general prohibitory order against the conversion of a canon, unless under certain circumstances,¹ into a monk.

Then were not St. Agatha's and Eggleston monasteries, and inhabited by monks? Certainly not. There is, indeed, evidence that in quite early times the houses of canons were sometimes spoken of as “monasteria”; but it was to them also that the monks applied the strong language quoted in an earlier chapter—“*clericorum stabula*”—the stalls of the secular clergy. Here, however, it must be observed that, as among monks, so among canons, there were manifold varieties, some of which—as, notably, the Premonstratensians—approached very nearly to the monastic ideal. The origin and development of the system seem to have been pretty much as follows. Small and active groups of missionaries lived together in monastic simplicity, but without rule or vow. Such centres of spiritual energy naturally became bishoprics, and then the customs hardened into something like a rule, and the “canonici”—distinguished thus, perhaps, from isolated parish priests—fell more and more into the position of appendages of the see;

¹ *Nisi publice lapsus fuerit.*

while, at the same time, other like bodies were formed, which, in the absence of a bishop, became, in the ecclesiastical sense, collegiate rather than cathedral. There is no doubt that the words "canon" and "regular," and "secular," were almost from the first used with some degree of looseness, but the above is, I think, a fair account of the earliest, the secular variety, of canon. But this "monster without a precedent," this "regular irregular," this "canonless canon," had not, for those troublous times, the elements of stability. We are accustomed, perhaps, to consider the monastic orders as self-refuting failures, but it is certain that they served their purpose better, and showed more vitality, than the apparently rational system of secular canons.¹ The attempted reform of Nicholas II in the Council of 1059 indicates the decay of the canonical life. Official revenues, according to his plan, were to be held in common, while rights of private property were respected. The real regeneration, however, came from within, and was already begun. At the Church of St. Rufus, at Avignon, a body of clergy, renouncing *all* separate

¹ From the days of Chrodegangus, Bishop of Metz, in the middle of the eighth century, there was clearly something not very unlike a "urle" for the canons; and in 817 we find certain changes introduced, especially in a curious point as to inheritance by canons of their bishop's "movables."

property and reviving the rule which they found in the 109th Epistle of St. Augustine of Hippo, became in 1138 the first "Regular" or "Austin" Canons.¹ We have thus advanced one step farther, to a point from which we are able to understand that a "Regular Canon" is, in reality, a mere tautology. He is a regular regular—a cleric bound by a rule milder, it is true, than even that of the unreformed Benedictine monks, but still strict enough for many, and for some even too exacting.

To Guyot de Provins—a writer of the thirteenth century who had rejected in turn the Cluniac, Cistercian, and Carthusian orders—the Austin Canons seem to have been especially congenial. "Among these," we find him saying, "one is well shod, well clothed, well fed." The date and place of the introduction of this order into England has been much disputed. The editor of the *Monasticon* inclines to Bishop Tanner's theory that the first foundation of Regular or Augustinian Canons was at Colchester, and gives 1105 as the probable date. But Mr. Freeman and Professor Stubbs tell us that Lanfranc introduced the order at Canterbury; and Lanfranc died in

¹ At the Lateran Council, A.D. 1139, Pope Innocent II ordained that all Regular Canons should submit to the rule of St. Austin in his 109th Epistle. From this order afterwards proceeded both Peter Martyr and Martin Luther.

1089. Mr. Freeman's quotation from William of Malmesbury seems to be conclusive in favour of this view.¹

I have alluded in the first paper of this series to the jealous antagonism which, even before the Conquest, existed between the monks and the secular clergy. It may, therefore, be interesting to notice that Lanfranc, the first to bring regular canons to England, was at the same time the constant champion of the monks against those who would have handed over all our cathedrals to the seculars. The see of Carlisle, founded by Henry I, seems to have been the first, and indeed the only, instance of the establishment in England of *Regular Canons* as a cathedral body; though the Scotch, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, set the example in not a few instances.

Meanwhile the war between monks and seculars ended in a partition of territory—Canterbury, Winchester, Durham, Coventry, Norwich, Rochester, Worcester, Ely, and Bath, falling to the monks; York, London, Exeter, Lichfield, Wells, Hereford, Lincoln, Salisbury, and Chichester, to the canons.²

¹ Stubbs, *Const. Hist.* vol. i. p. 327; Freeman, *Norman Conquest*, vol. iv. p. 363.

² It must be remembered that Oxford, Peterborough, Chester, and Gloucester were not erected into bishoprics till Henry VIII. Westminster, which is Benedictine, was made cathedral by Henry, and "collegiate" by Elizabeth.



RICHMOND CASTLE

It still remains to say a few words about the Premonstratensians—the particular variety of Regular Canons with which we are now more immediately concerned.

The Order of Premonstratensians, or White Canons, was the result of the reforming zeal of St. Norbert, and it seems to have represented the utmost height of self-mortification to which a non-monastic college or cathedral could aspire. Thus there is evidence that the Priory of Twinham, or Christchurch, in Hampshire, was before and after the Norman Conquest occupied by a dean and twenty-four *secular* canons. Then, about 1150, the rule of St. Augustine appears to have been adopted by them, and finally, in the charter of 22 Edward I. this house is included in those of the Premonstratensian Order.

Norbert, born of noble family on the lower Rhine towards the close of the eleventh century, was a man not inclined to take too serious a view of life and its responsibilities, till sudden conviction and conversion fell upon him in the course of a violent thunder-storm.

Unable, like many another, to overcome the jealousy and blindness of which it comes that in his own country none may be a prophet, St. Norbert sold all he possessed, abandoned his benefices, and,

with two companions, set forth to preach the Gospel. Resisting the offers of Pope Gelasius, refusing the bishopric of Cambray, and all other preferment, praying successfully for the gift of tongues, he struggled on towards his appointed but as yet unknown goal. At last Bartholomew, Bishop of Laon, found for him a damp and lonesome hollow in the forest of Coucy. He was to have his choice, it seems, of temple or chapel, desert or garden, but had rejected one after another as suitable enough for a religious foundation but not intended by God for him. Here, however, in a little chapel of St. John the Baptist, Norbert betook him to prayer, and so continuing with Hugo, his comrade, far into the night, was at last rewarded by a vision of the Blessed Virgin herself, encircled by angels and radiant with light.

She told the future saint to fix his abode on another part of that very hill, and at the same time prescribed the distinguishing vesture for the new order—the cloak and biretta were to be white, the cassock alone black. And Norbert saw in the very hands of the Virgin Mother the white woollen garb—the *candida vestis*—from which the name of “White Canons” was to be derived.

There, at Prémontré, or Praemonstratum, he

gathered first thirteen, and then a larger company of brethren, and founded a house which was to the Premonstratensian Order what Citeaux was to the Cistercians. Even the aristocratic element in the constitution of the latter was reproduced by Norbert; and the three houses next in dignity to Prémontré emulated the dignity of the chief daughters of Citeaux. At length the Archbishopric of Magdeburg was forced upon the acceptance of the saint, and in 1129 he resigned the headship of the now prosperous order in favour of his old companion Hugh. St. Norbert died in 1134, and was canonised (1582) by Gregory XIII. And so, in the womb of time, began the potential existence of St. Agatha's, Eggleston, and Coverham.

The remains of the last-named are too scanty to compete in the limits of these pages with the fame and beauty of the others; but, from the view given in Ellis's *Dugdale*, it would seem that in the earlier part of the century considerable parts of the choir, transepts, and perhaps even of the nave of the church, were standing. And, still, as we descend from the high ground behind Middleham upon the garden and outbuildings which now surround and mask its remnants, or as we gaze from the breezy height of Witton Fell upon the windings of the

Cover, we may give a passing thought to Ranulph de Glanville, Justiciary of Henry II, as well as to Miles Coverdale, and note that this quiet nook produced at different times the authors of the first digest of our laws and the first revision of our Scriptures.

On the 5th of February we are, or might be, reminded of the martyrdom of St. Agatha, who suffered 251 A.D., in the Decian persecution.

To the wretch who was sent by Quintianus to assail her virtue and her faith, she answered, "My mind is firmly settled and grounded in Christ; your words are winds, your promises are rains, your terrors are floods, which however hardly they may beat upon the foundation of my house, it cannot ever fall, for it is founded upon a firm rock."

It is much to be regretted that Roald of Richmond and Lord Scrope did not lay these noble words to heart when the former founded and the latter enlarged St. Agatha's Abbey of White Canons on the banks of the Swale. The roofless walls which now threaten to slide into the river might then, perhaps, have been more worthy monuments of the steadfastness of her in whose name and memory they were raised. The scanty remains of massive transition Norman, and the contrasted grace of the later

work, present, in this wooded vale, a picture which we would gladly guard against the hand of Time.

The relation of masonry to landscape, lost, alas ! as an instinct, and not yet regained as an art, is the key to the special charm of nearly every ruin. The gulf between the finished and laborious product of human skill and the lavished beauties of spontaneous nature, is just perceptibly narrowed by the blurring of angles and the clinging growth of ivy, and the memory of the aching hands and bleeding feet, and the burden and the heat of the long day, is blended with the fancied presence of that spirit whose song is said to be—

“ There is no effort on my brow ;
I do not strive, I do not weep.
I rush with the swift spheres, and glow
In joy ; and when I will I sleep.
Yet that severe, that earnest air
I saw, I felt it once, but where ? ”

Some parts of St. Agatha's, noticeably the range containing the frater and some interlaced arcading in a very puzzling position farther west, are of great intrinsic beauty, and the early work done in the middle of the twelfth century by Constable Roaldus is well represented by the doorway in the western cloister, with its now half-obliterated cats'-head

mouldings. The Scropes, into whose hands the possessions of Roald passed, in the reign of Edward II, almost entirely rebuilt the Abbey on a more magnificent scale, and the claim of the latter to the title of founder having been ignored by Leland, has since been disputed. The Abbots of St. Agatha were not, as far as is known, very eminent men, and the only one, I believe, who appears on the page of our national history is found in the scarcely congenial company of Geoffrey Chaucer. These two, the ecclesiastic and the satirist of ecclesiastics, were both sworn and examined as witnesses on behalf of Richard le Scrope in the famous fourteenth-century case of Scrope and Grosvenor. The suit was instituted by the Scropes in defence of their right to the arms "*azure a bend or,*" against the assumption of them by Sir Robert Grosvenor, and when "Sir Simon Parson" of Wensley had produced in court an alb, the apparels to which were embroidered with the Scrope arms "*azure a bend or*" of very ancient work, the Abbot deposed that the same shield appeared in windows, in glass of the chambers and of the frater, and on altar frontals, vestments, and a corporax case of silk belonging to the Abbey church, of which the Scropes were recognised as founders.

The ground-plan of St. Agatha's, owing perhaps



ST. AGATHA'S ABBEY, NEAR RICHMOND

to the bend of the river and the fall of the ground, and probably also to the proximity of the parish church, is exceedingly irregular ; the south-west angle of the cloister was decidedly acute, and the eastward tendency of the buildings, which should have run due south from the west end of the church, is fatal to right angles elsewhere. The distribution of the various buildings, especially those near the river, is an interesting question, the discussion of which would perhaps hardly be appropriate to these pages.¹

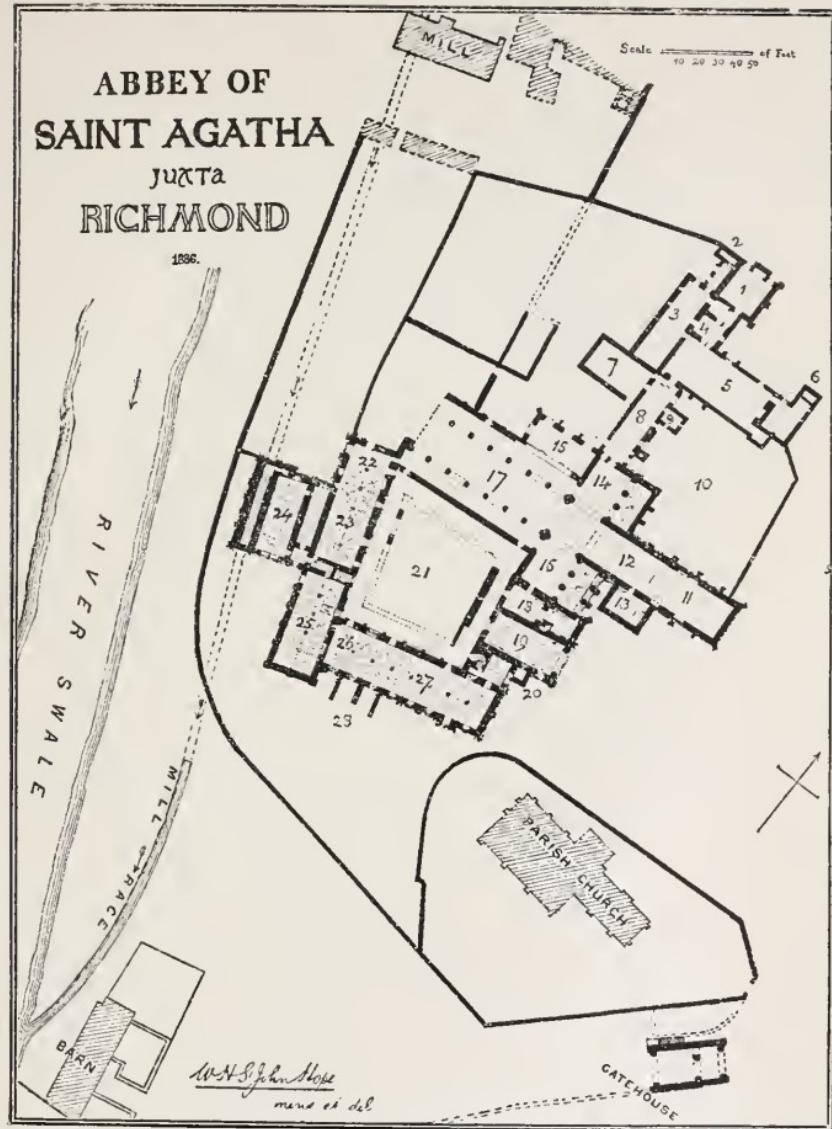
It may, however, be remarked that, like the Benedictines and unlike the Cistercians, the canons had their "frater" lengthwise to the south walk of the cloister, and they seem to have preferred to raise it on a vaulted undercroft, such as we have already

¹ Since the writer visited St. Agatha's it has been almost completely excavated and explored by Mr. S. John Hope, to whose exhaustive account, reprinted from the *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, every serious inquirer should refer. As to the range of buildings on the west side of the cloister, Mr. Hope says : "Generally speaking, this part of a monastery was devoted to the reception of the stores, and the housing of guests of the better sort ; and known as the cellarum. At St. Agatha's, in addition to these, part of the building was devoted to the canons." "From about the middle of the west side of the cellarum a compact block of buildings extends towards the river. Owing to a sudden fall in the ground this block is built upon a vaulted basement and is three stories high. There are signs of the main range having been also so planned, but for some reason this was confined to the southern half only."

noticed in the exceptional Cistercian instances of Rievaulx and Byland. The pillared and vaulted room west of the frater at St. Agatha's, and commonly called the kitchen, was most likely the guest-hall. There are strong indications of the existence of the real kitchen south of the western half of the frater, and the usual hatch or "frater-hole" may be seen at a reasonable elevation in the wall above. The mysterious iron hooks on the north, south, and east walls of the frater are, I am told, only the relics of a recent year, when some sort of temporary floor and roof was run up for the purpose of a ball or other entertainment. Of the church itself, which was cruciform with aisleless choir, but north and south aisles to the nave, the distinctive features are the supposed Scrope chapel in the angle of the transept and north aisle, and a chapel or sacristy south of the choir. The Gate-house, with a large upper room, probably used as the lodging of the lowest class of guests, is singularly perfect. The usual double entrance, a larger and a smaller side by side, may be seen within the vaulted passage, and the whole space is spanned by a pointed arch, beneath which, more perhaps from wayward fancy than for constructive reasons, is a single semicircular order. The buildings north of the transept have been iden-

ABBEY OF
SAINT AGATHA
juxta
RICHMOND

Scale 10 20 30 40 50 of Feet



1. Kitchen. 2. Necessarium. 3. Cellar. 4. Buttery. 5. Infirmary Hall.
 6. Necessarium. 7. Misericorde. 8. Corridor. 9. Prison. 10. Infirmary Garden.
 11. Presbytery. 12. Choir. 13. Sacristy. 14. N. Transept.
 15. Chapel. 16. S. Transept. 17. Nave. 18. Sacristy. 19. Chapter-house.
 20. Pit. 21. Cloister Garth. 22. Warming-house. 23. Dorter Subvault. 24. Guests' Solar. 25. Great Hall. 26. Cellarer's Checker. 27. Frater Sub-vault. 28. Site of Kitchen.

tified as the infirmary. They must have been approached from the cloister through the church, and finally by a corridor of considerable length. This group is of great interest and importance on account of its completeness.

It is needless to say that local tradition clings fondly and confidently to the myth of a secret passage. Such a tradition attaches to all monastic ruins in Yorkshire, and probably elsewhere ; and it is at once almost cruel and absolutely futile to insist on the identity of this romantic cavern with the simple but efficacious arrangement for drainage which so often affords a valuable clue to the whole ground-plan of a monastic ruin. From St. Agatha's the mysterious communication is said to have been with St. Martin's Priory, at Richmond, once a cell of St. Mary's Abbey, at York.

The presence, within two miles of Easby, of this desecrated remnant, as well as of the more important remains of the Church of the Grey Friars, may serve to remind us how many phases of the religious life gathered at different times around the grim majesty of the great Norman keep. It has been necessary in the present series of sketches to ignore the new light which Dominic and Francis kindled at the dying embers of monasticism, but the history of

neither system can be even fairly outlined without reference to the other as antecedent or as sequel. Meanwhile, it is to be feared that there are not a few here and there to whom the distinction between a monk and a friar is as misty as it would seem to have been to the compiler of the accepted guide to a remote Cistercian Abbey, who boldly states that the main division of *monks* is into black and white *friars*.

But the graceful perpendicular tower which Mr Brunet-Debaines has sketched is a really important link between our two Premonstratensian houses. In a moment it carries our thoughts from Easby and Richmond to Greta, to Brignal Bank, to Rokeby, and to Eggleston. It is poetry that so lightly overleaps the twelve or fourteen intervening miles, and it is not the too hackneyed "Pegasus" of Walter Scott, but a genuine fifteenth-century ballad of "The grizeliest beast that ever mote be." The fruitless efforts of the good Franciscans to bring this "beest of prycce" alive to Richmond have been long familiar to readers of Whitaker's famous *History of Craven*. "Her walk," we are told, "was endlang Greta side," and in this, while deprecating her invincible contumacy, and shuddering at her insensibility to the best medieval Latin, we must now imitate the heroine of the "Felon Sowe of Rokeby."

THE FRATER, ST. AGATHA'S



Among the eleven water-colour drawings by Turner which Messrs. Christie sold in July 1882 for Mr. Ruskin was the sketch of Eggleston Abbey, engraved by Higham for Whitaker's *History of Richmondshire*. In Mr. Ruskin's 1878 catalogue this sketch, under the head of *Fourth Group—Reality—England at Rest*, is described as "one of the finest of the series in its foliage; notable also for intense truth to the spot." And he has spoken elsewhere of "the quiet sincerity of transcript with which Turner's younger spirit reverenced the streams of Greta and Tees."

The colours are, as was even then pointed out, a good deal faded, but, having seen the picture first and then the place, I can at least testify that, unlike some of the most beautiful of the master's works, it is easily recognisable. My efforts to discover the precise point of view, which must have been somewhere in the bed of the stream, were not successful, but the engraving in "Whitaker" will enable any one who is so disposed to renew the by no means arduous attempt.

So much has been said and written about the romantic beauty of the Tees and the country about Barnard Castle, that it is something to be able to say that the glamour is really there. The descriptions with which *Rokeby* abounds are not perhaps among

the highest efforts of the genius of Sir Walter Scott ; but somehow, in the familiar ring of Edmund of Winsor's song, it is all gathered as true poetry alone can gather and preserve the very odour and aspect of natural beauty.

“ O, Brignal banks are wild and fair
And Greta woods are green ;
And you may gather garlands there
Would grace a summer queen.”

Eggleston Abbey stands higher than St. Agatha's, and looks down upon the junction of the Thorsgill Beck and the Tees. The remains of the sacristy,¹ etc., and dormitory above, have been so much disguised by conversion to other uses that they are now more picturesque than instructive. Farm implements lie here and there in the cloister-court, and from the ruins emerge, in place of white-robed canons, a mild-eyed mare and foal. But the church itself—up which dashed Bertram of Risingham, on a somewhat different steed—has much interest and not a little beauty. It was never a very grand or elaborate building, but it grew in the usual fashion. The north side of the very short nave (or perhaps westward extension of the ritual choir) has windows, round inside and widely splayed, but externally

¹ The chapter-house was octagonal and stood clear of this range.



TOWER OF THE GREY FRIARS, RICHMOND

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pointed and narrow. Then comes an oddly patched and altered west end, with one decorated window high up and by no means in the centre; while the south wall shows a row of four, also decorated and very good.

The canons were evidently at one time dissatisfied with the height of their church, and the exterior effect has been much interfered with by an extension above the corbel-table of the original roof. The transept windows—to which we next come—are more elaborate than those of the nave, and the choir has lancets grouped on the north side in three and two, and on the south in twos only. There was no aisle, even as a later addition, and the windows in the north wall of the nave are high up so as to clear the level of the cloister, which had a wooden pentice roof. The east window is usually called Perpendicular, but its details correspond with the lancets, and there is good reason to consider it late Early English, though that is not the period which we should expect to find represented in this precise situation. The old door to the "dorter" is¹ visible in the north transept, and high above it is a window evidently so placed to clear the roof of that apartment. The cloister has extended farther westward than the nave of the church, by which means, in spite

¹ Or rather was when these words were written.

of its unusual northern site, it may have caught some southern warmth and light.

Eggleston must have been a humbler place than St. Agatha's, and when we come in our next chapter to trace the almost invariable addition of an aisle or a part of an aisle to the churches of the canons, we shall see how modest was the ambition which contented itself with raising the roof of this short and aisleless nave. At the Cistercian Abbey of Sawley, in Ribblesdale, there is a parallel instance of the extension of the cloister westward of the church; but there the so-called nave is so minute as to leave little doubt that no more of the church was ever completed than was needed for the purpose of a choir. For it must never be forgotten that many a ritual choir extended beyond the transect crossing and far exceeded the dimensions of the architectural presbytery. At the Premonstratensian Abbey of Bayham in Sussex the position of the cloisters is still more strange, for they begin at the extreme west of a long nave, and do not extend far enough eastwards to meet the transept.¹ There, too, a separate passage, which does duty for a north aisle,

¹ Mr. Hope, I believe, explains this as the result of a fourteenth-century enlargement eastwards by the erection of a new presbytery and transept.

runs only part of the way from the transept towards the west, and leaves the end of the nave in its original narrow simplicity.

As we turn again towards Barnard Castle, though the new and well-intentioned Bowes Museum haunts and torments our sight, the views that inspired Sir Walter Scott, and Creswick, and Turner, still follow one another in delightful succession. We see the warmish stone of the town and its roofs of slate and brightest tile, the glittering white of the distant farms and cottages, the purple and russet of the moor, and, for foreground, the green and flowery meadows, and the wooded rocks that half conceal the rush and sparkle of the Tees.

XI

BOLTON, GUISBOROUGH, AND KIRKHAM

THE Priories of Bolton in the West Riding, Kirkham in the East, and Guisborough in the North, are grouped here in virtue of the fact that all three are houses of ordinary Canons Regular of Saint Augustine. They will each, therefore, help, if only a little, to illustrate that connection between religious orders and religious architecture which has been the central thought of the present series of papers.

The most important thing to remember in studying the remains of Augustinian houses, whether Premonstratensian or otherwise, is their close connection with parish churches. In other orders the same, or an analogous connection, was occasional: with the canons alone it was normal.

The ordinary monastic church, which had no connection whatever with the church of a parish—except where, as at Bernoldswic, it swallowed up



GUISBOROUGH PRIORY

and superseded one already existing—was from the first a large cruciform building with aisles ; and some at least of the secular cathedrals adopted this type. But where the canons were collegiate and their church therefore not cathedral, we always have one of two alternatives—either the college was founded in connection with a previously existing parish church, or the new church was built for parish and canons to share.

Now our early parish churches have no aisles and no western towers. They were sometimes cruciform and sometimes not (the symbolism in the latter case being preserved in the threefold division into nave, chancel, and sanctuary) ; sometimes, too, there was a tower, but if so it was always central.

And with the cruciform variety of this type the original work in all canons' churches will be found to conform. As time went on and ritual developed, the canons became almost everywhere enamoured of aisles, but meanwhile they had built their cloisters against their naves—here and there, as at Eggleston, on the north, but more frequently on the south. How was it possible under these circumstances to add aisles ? The ground-plan of Bolton shows to what extent and how this difficulty was overcome. The canons built north aisles because on that side

their space was free, and they sometimes comforted themselves for the defect on the south side by enlarging and beautifying the windows of the nave. This is precisely what has been done at Bolton. Here, as elsewhere, the building began with the choir, in the lower part of which is still to be found the oldest work in the church. On and beyond this old work, a practically new choir was afterwards erected ; but even this preserved the original aisleless type. Proceeding in order to the north and west of the nave, the canons concluded with the south and the cloister, where pointed arches and transition work are visible. Hardly were these finished when the fashion for aisles set in, and the north wall had to be disturbed. At Ripon, where there was no cloister, a south aisle, as well as a north, was added. Bayham, which is rightly referred to as a noticeable instance of the survival of the aisleless type, has an arrangement of passages, which, though not adapted for processions, must have considerably modified the external effect of the unbroken length of nave.

It is remarkable that the choirs of Kirkham and Guisborough, as well as of Bolton, show a very high order of architectural beauty. The east end of Guisborough, in fact, is as fine as anything of the

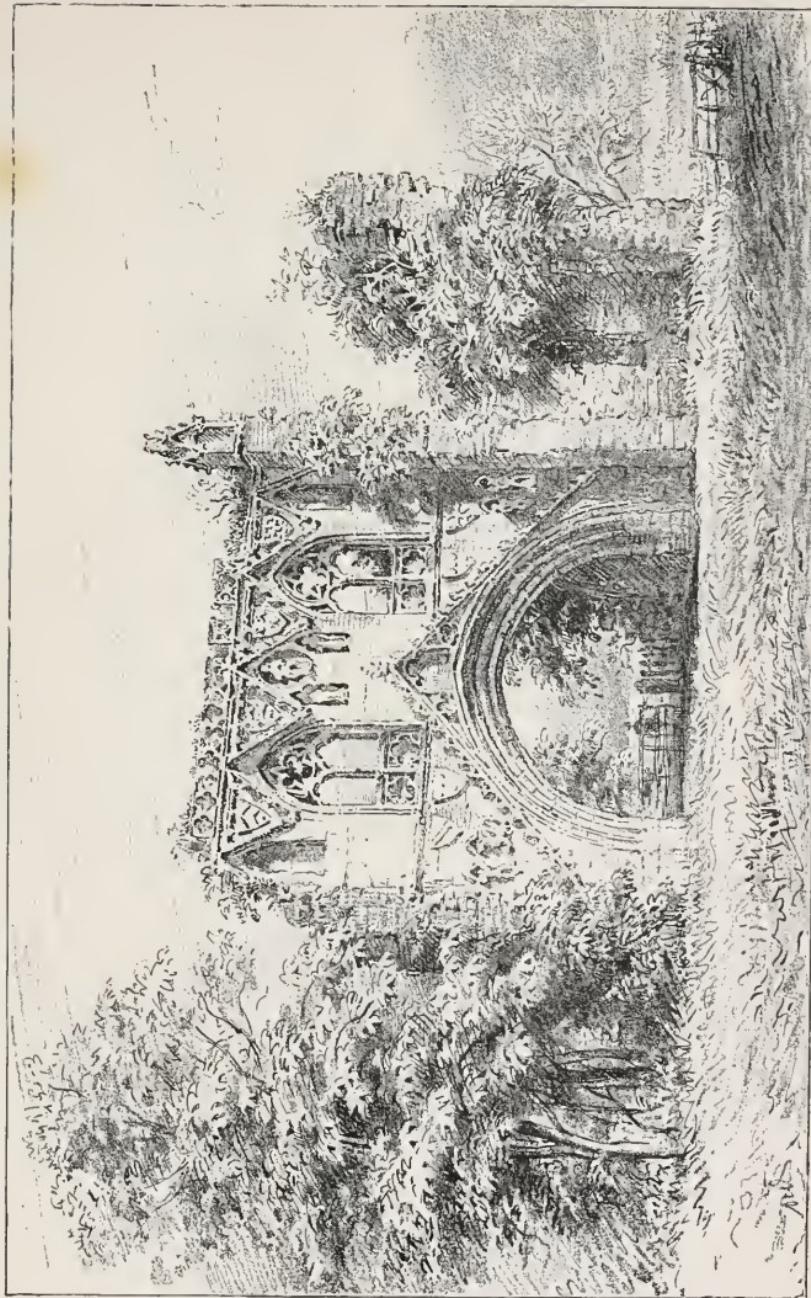
kind in England. Though the tracery of the great centre window is gone, its majestic proportions and much of its rich moulding remain to appeal to the unlearned, while the trained eye and educated imagination of the architect can restore, almost at a glance, the vast web of Early Decorated work which once made it a chief glory of its date. The return walls, alas! are gone, and the only remnant of the church now visible above ground is the bare and unsupported curtain of this glorious façade. In its width of 70 feet were included two aisles, each with a window of three lights. The mouldings of these windows, as of the centre, are very rich—oak-leaves predominating in the former and vines in the latter. The whole is supported by four deep and massive buttresses, of which the corner ones are grouped each with two others in a cluster of three. All the buttresses have crockets and finials; but whereas the one at the north is plain, that at the south is elaborate with trefoil and quatrefoil panel-lining. Each of the intermediate buttresses has a now tenantless niche with crocketed canopy, the bases being level with that of the great window. Above each buttress there rises from the main wall a crocketed octagonal spire. Over the centre window, and also above the indications of the vaulting, is

another window of five lights, viz. one quatrefoil headed with two trefoil on either side of it.

The west end of the church has been revealed by digging, and in the well-kept garden there still remains a bit of the cellar under the "frater." This, however, probably did not, as was supposed, communicate with the cloister. There is every indication that the arch in that direction was merely a cupboard, and a groove for a shelf is very apparent. Opposite is a square-headed opening which has been blocked up in later times. But neither was this a doorway, as a careful observation of the chamfer will show. There is little doubt that it was in reality a "frater-hole," or hatch, for service of provisions, and a corresponding one is visible among the ivy at a higher elevation, and related to it much as the corresponding apertures are related at St. Agatha's. The gateway and part of the gate-house remain—they are transition Norman. Parts of the Brus tomb, now exhibited in slices in the porch of the parish church, are interesting relics of the founder's family.

Though the town of Guisborough has of late relinquished its claim to be considered beautiful, and the high-flown compliment which Camden paid it would, but for Murray's *Guide*, be as clean for-

THE GATE-HOUSE, KIRKHAM PRIORY



gotten as “ould Doctor Len of Yorke,” who “usually sent his patients to lye there to recover their health,” yet the neighbourhood of Rhosbery Topping and the vision of distant moors give it an advantage over the tamer region where Kirkham nestles in the green valley of the Derwent. Sometimes, indeed, on a day of mist, and rain, and rare cold gleams, the town of Guisborough—in spite of the new houses run up to meet the needs of the ironworkers—has a picturesque beauty worth the notice of an artist. In the foreground, near the church, are stone houses with green and dark-brown shutters and shop-fronts, contrasting with cream-coloured neighbours; while beyond, as the hill slopes downward, bright, red-tiled roofs come into view, and here and there a patch of pale-green grass in the disused width of the road. But Kirkham Priory lies on the border of the great plain of York, and has neither town nor moor for setting, but only the green beauty of a woody vale and the pleasant winding of a Yorkshire stream. It was founded in 1121 by Walter l’Espec, of whom some account was given in the chapter on Rievaulx Abbey, and Kirkham was a manor of the L’Especs.

Lady Milton and Mr. Foljambe have set an excellent example by sanctioning and encouraging the explorations of so zealous and careful an antiquary

as Mr. W. H. S. John Hope. Of the church itself there only remains a fragment of an east end, less perfect and majestic, but of scarcely less exquisite design and workmanship, than Guisborough. For the following details of the dimensions of the church and the disposition of the other buildings, I am indebted to Mr. Hope, whose excavations have reached their most instructive stage since I have had an opportunity of personally inspecting them.

The choir was 120 feet long by 28 feet 6 inches wide, and of Early English date. The central east window was a triplet, while that of each aisle was a single lancet. The transept was 125 feet across. Its southern arm, which has been excavated, was of later date than the choir, and shows two eastern chapels measuring 11 feet by 8 feet. There are signs of the existence of a central tower, westward of which we find an aisleless nave not less than 120 feet long. South of the nave were the cloisters, 95 feet by 110, communicating by doors with both nave and transept. In the north-west corner is an unusual flight of stairs leading down to a slype, and intruding awkwardly into the cloister alley. Mr. Hope points out that both the cellarum and frater were raised on an undercroft; and he has noted in the south-west angle of the cloister a stair to the latter, close to

which is a recess or almery below the cloister level. The chapter-house was 74 feet by 30 feet 6 inches, and had arcaded walls with twenty-six stalls on each side. The east cloister seems to have been irregular from the setting back of the chapter-house about the depth of one of its own bays. South of the "common-house," which was normal, there ran a long cellar, or undercroft, with an eastward inclination, the connection of which with the very large "necessarium" points to the extension above it of the dormer of the canons. Eastward again, are remains of a large infirmary hall. The frater (98 feet 6 inches long by 28 feet 6 inches wide) was entered by a very beautiful late Norman doorway, which has been engraved in Parker's *Glossary of Architecture*. In the west cloister is a fine geometrical lavatory, and the kitchen occupied a position at the south-west corner of the frater. The west door of the church was approached by a flight of steps as wide as the nave; and, indeed, the level, or levels, of the ground must have been to a great extent the cause of the peculiar form which the vague Augustinian pattern here assumed. The rigid uniformity of the Cistercians must not be looked for among the canons, and hence there is little safety in arguing from one house of the latter order to another.

But it is time to pass to a more famous and frequented scene—a place so beautiful and so romantic that the antiquary and the architect may well be hushed into mute, unreasoning rapture. Dear to Turner and to Girtin, to Wordsworth and to Charlotte Brontë, the Valley of the Wharfe is haunted by the spirits of painters and of poets, fain to meet at Bolton the thronging shades of undistinguished priors and the brave and quiet presence of that lover of obscurity who gazed from Barden Tower upon the stars—Clifford, “the Shepherd Lord.”

The very bridge from which we catch our first glimpse of this enchanted realm has its associations ; for the last work ever sent to the Academy by Girtin was a view (in oils) of *Bolton Bridge, Yorkshire*.¹ But to most the predominating influence will be that of Wordsworth. “The White Doe of Rylstone” perhaps invites, and has certainly encountered, comparison with the narrative poems of Scott ; but the interest of such comparison lies, not in the awarding of preference to either, but in the realisation of the vast chasm which separates the inspirations of the two.

Wordsworth has disclaimed all rivalry and asserted

¹ In the Kensington Museum is an interesting water-colour view of Rievaulx (1798) by this painter.



BOLTON PRIORY

for himself an independent sphere ; but the contrast, as worked out, for instance, in Professor Shairp's *Aspects of Modern Poetry*, is by no means uninstructive. Wordsworth's stern father, steadfast son, and sweet, ill-fated maiden, are almost allegorical personages, and the lovely vision of the snow-white doe is hardly less human than they. For in Wordsworth the action and the characters, which in Scott would have been all in all, are but the vesture of a thought, spell-bound by him among the Bolton woods.

The virtues of the preservers of ancient monuments and of open spaces for the people happily meet in the Duke of Devonshire, who steadfastly resists the temptation to let railways and villas convert into a mine of wealth what is now a treasury of beauty and romance. Thousands of tourists in a summer day may bring their share of sandwich-papers and vulgarity—for all men are hungry, and most are more or less vulgar—but neither the ruins nor the rocks are the worse for these visits, while many busy lives are brightened, and a few—nay, who can tell how many?—spirits lifted up. For miles the wood-walks wander beneath “the oak, and the ash, and the bonny ivy-tree,” where the tall fox-glove and the blue campanula sprinkle the rich beds

of moss, or the countless blossoms of the earlier year border the brown and dappled stream.

“Valle sub umbrosâ locus est aspergine multâ
Uvidus ex alto desilientis aquæ.
Tot fuerant illic quot habet natura colores
Pictaque dissimili flore nitebat humus.”

Long ago and far away as these words were written, they are recalled to-day by the little glen which beguiles us to stray into the so-called “Valley of Desolation.”

Following the stream, which, with its abrupt descent, forms the chief feature of this glen, we rejoin the Wharfe not far from the famous Strid, the deep and narrow cleft in the rocks well known through Wordsworth’s smaller Wharfedale ballad of “The Force of Prayer.”

It may be observed, in passing, that the really valuable Yorkshire “Murray” is a little misleading in its suggestion that the scene here is *especially* impressive after rain. The headlong rush of the swollen stream is doubtless good to see, but it entirely disguises the peculiar features of the place on which poetry and local tradition have laid so firm a grasp. The contrast is between the narrow cleft in the rocks, over which not men alone, but even ladies, spring with ease, and the hitherto unfathomed depth of the

dark and almost foamless water. In flood-time, both features are lost—the famous rocks are covered, and the dark thread is merged in a wide swirl of eddying foam.

To this treacherous chasm tradition attributes the untimely end of the young Romilly—the “boy of Egremont,” and the founding of Bolton Priory. The legend cannot be more briefly told than in Wordsworth’s well-known lines :

“ Young Romilly through Barden Woods
Is ranging high and low,
And holds a greyhound in a leash,
To let slip upon buck or doe.

“ The pair have reached that fearful chasm,
How tempting to bestride !
For lordly Wharfe is there pent in
With rocks on either side.

“ The striding-place is called the Strid,¹—
A name which it took of yore :
A thousand years hath it borne that name,
And shall a thousand more.

“ And hither is young Romilly come,
And what may now forbid
That he, perhaps for the hundredth time,
Shall bound across the Strid ?

¹ Not, however, by way of derivation. We know better nowadays, and talk of Anglo-Saxon “ stryth ” =tumult.

“ He sprang in glee,—for what cared he
That the river was strong and the rocks were steep?
But the greyhound in the leash hung back,
And checked him in his leap.”

The foresters bring the news to the boy’s mother, Alice de Romillé, and she, after an interval of speechless sorrow, decrees the founding of a priory “in Bolton, on the field of Wharfe.” Neither the tradition, nor the poem founded on it, will be much the worse for being shown to conflict materially with ascertained facts.

The priory now at Bolton was founded first at Embsay, by William de Meschines and Cecilia, his wife. In 1151 Alice de Romillé, or Rumeli, their daughter, granted to the canons her manor of Bolton in exchange for those of Skipton and Stretton, and the priory was at once removed. This grant of Bolton, and the consequent removal of the canons, is connected by the legend with the death of the boy of Egremont, but Dr. Whitaker ruthlessly announced, in his *History of Craven*, that the “boy” was himself a party to the Charter of Translation. To those who cannot enjoy a tradition without a due admixture of truth, it may be some comfort to reflect that Cecilia de Rumeli, the mother of Alice, and original foundress of the priory at Embsay, may



BOLTON PRIORY

quite possibly have lost a son in the way described by Wordsworth.

A "comptus" of the priory, from 1290 to 1325, gives many graphic details of its condition and history. Between 1316 and 1320 the invading Scots appear in very grim reality, and the accounts show the damages which their inroads left to be repaired. But meanwhile the prior is attending Parliament at York, twice in one year and once in another, and Bolton, in spite of everything, becomes an important place, with "armigeri," or dependent gentlemen, clothed, boarded, and lodged; free servants, indoor and out—the former including master carpenter, master cook and assistant, brewer, baker, master smith, "hokarius," "fagotarius," and "ductor saccorum;" while John de Lambhird (Magister Bercarius), and from seventy to one hundred and eight more, worked out-of-doors on the farms and granges. Besides these, there were "villeins" in gross who were practically domestic slaves.¹ The prior has a separate lodging, chapel, and stables, built by one De Land, who seems to have been a great dignitary, and to have attended two sovereigns (Edward I and II), entertained two Metropolitans, and made two journeys to Rome.

¹ See, however, Wordsworth's *Ecclesiastical Sonnets*, part ii. sonnet iv.

It is to be regretted that no really accurate ground-plan of Bolton has yet been produced. The best is that which was given in the *Manual of the Yorkshire Archaeological Association*, on the occasion of their visit to the ruins in 1877. In this the dimensions of the original church are approximately shown, and the existing foundations of the octagonal chapter-house and some of the domestic buildings clearly, if somewhat hastily, outlined. It has been conjectured that the central tower, which certainly formed part of the original design and as certainly no longer exists, may have fallen with such disastrous effects as to necessitate the rebuilding of the choir and transepts in the fourteenth century. However this may be, the western tower was begun in 1520, after the fashion so often traceable in parish churches. That is to say, the building of towers being a long process, the nave was left intact meanwhile; and as in this particular case the work was never finished, we have the instructive spectacle of a thirteenth-century west front standing close to the tall arch of a sixteenth-century tower, which rises only to the height of the nave. The usual monastic arrangement of screens, which seems to have been adopted by the canons, was especially suitable when, as was so often the case, part of the building was

used as a parish church and part as the chapel of the priory. The choir, it must be remembered, was separated from the nave by two very solid screens.¹ Of these, the eastern, called the "pulpitum," was capable of supporting a broad gallery from which parts of the service were sung, and which still survives as the organ-loft in some of our cathedrals. Westwards was the rood-screen, equally solid, and having an altar in the middle, with a small door on each side. This, which was known as the "Jesus Altar," or "Altar of St. Cross," served, in such cases as the one before us, for the parish; and here, at Bolton, where the nave is still used as a parish church, the altar stands precisely in this position, and the piscina may be seen close at hand in the south wall. At Marrick, a convent of Benedictine nuns near Richmond, and strangely near the Cistercian nunnery of Ellerton, the nave of the church has been rebuilt and is still used by the parish, while the choir has fallen into decay. It may well have been that here, as at Bolton, the western arm was always the parish church, and thus, at the dissolution, it was easy to wall it off completely and leave the rest to its fate.²

¹ See on this subject Chap. V. "Fountains."

² Leland, however, has a curious theory that at Marrick the parish originally occupied the *eastern* arm. If this is true, they must have migrated westwards at the dissolution.

Happily the choir at Bolton has yielded but slowly to decay, and some of the fourteenth-century ornament and wall arcading retains its beauty almost unimpaired. The practical leaden roof which protects the nave and shelters the Sunday worshippers, goes far to spoil the picturesque effect of the church from many points of view, but does not help us to forgive the spoilers who unroofed the choir.

Strange as it is to think of Clifford, the Shepherd Lord,¹ frequenting the company of these cloistered ecclesiastics, it is stranger to pass in imagination to the wild, half-brutal, and yet sterling "Protestant dissenters" who afterwards peopled the remote hamlets and homesteads; strangest perhaps of all, to recall—and who can help recalling?—Mrs. Gaskell's description of another Wharfedale group—the six little Brontë children who "used to walk out, hand in hand, towards the glorious wild moors which in

¹ Confided in infancy to shepherds who concealed him among the Cumberland Fells, he was restored to his estates by Henry VII when he was twenty-five.

"Love had he seen in huts where poor men lie;
His daily teachers had been woods and rills,
The silence that is in the starry sky--
The sleep that is among the lonely hills."

WORDSWORTH.

after days they loved so passionately ; the elder ones taking thoughtful care for the toddling wee things." Surely somewhere on the misty moor they are wandering now—still six still hand in hand.

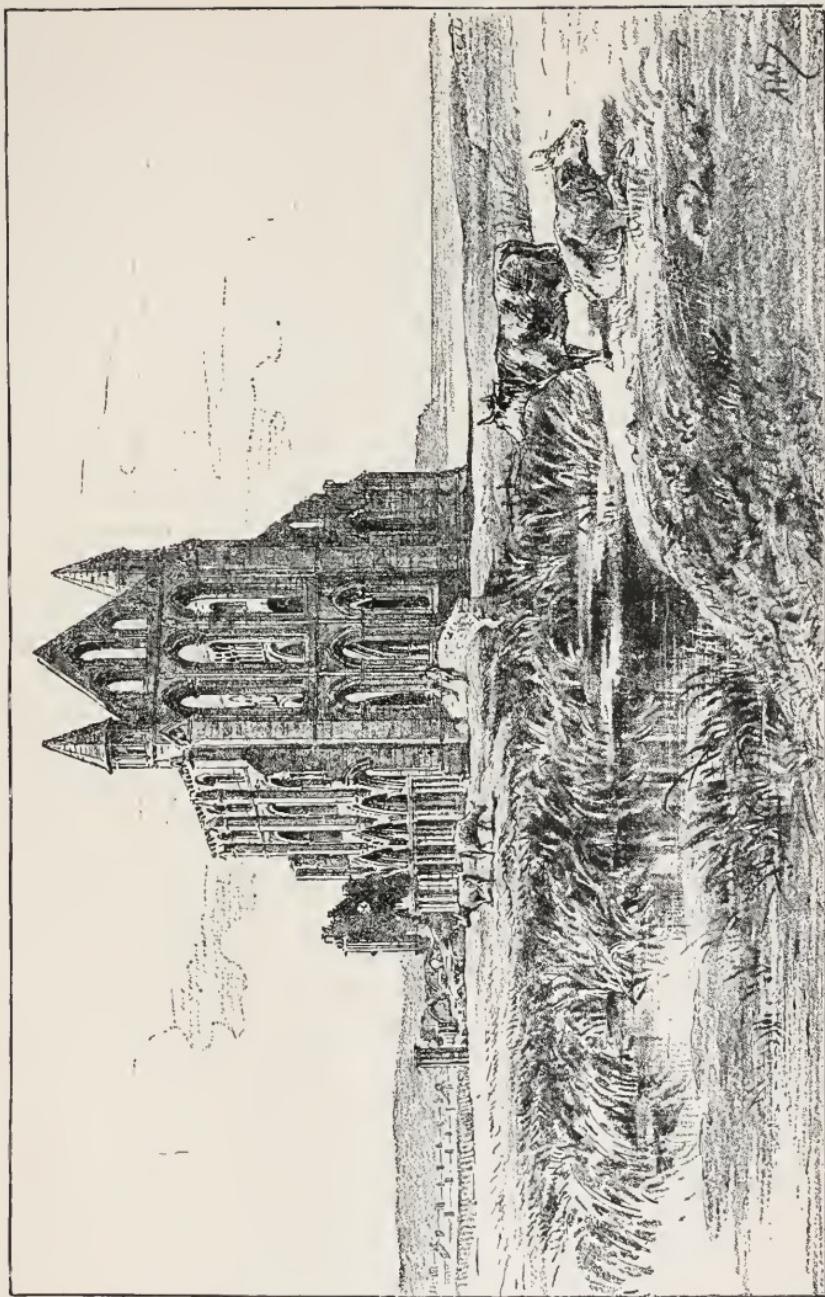
XII

WHITBY

IN our first chapter we turned away from the busy streets of York, with all their crowd of present interests and associations of the past, to linger among the ruins of St. Mary's Abbey. Since then, as we have wandered in desert places brooding over an obscure but not unreal episode, in many a bright pasture and solemn shade, our feet have brushed the dew and our eyes and hearts found rest, while even the half-scornful contemplation of a purely spiritual conflict has soothed the fretfulness of our souls. Not for to-day or to-morrow, but for ever, did these monks design their buildings or mould their dispositions, confiding, with deliberate faith, to future generations the completing of the one, and to God the perfecting of the other.

At Whitby we once more enter a thronged and busy town, and once more only to turn our backs

WHITBY ABBEY. THE CHOIR



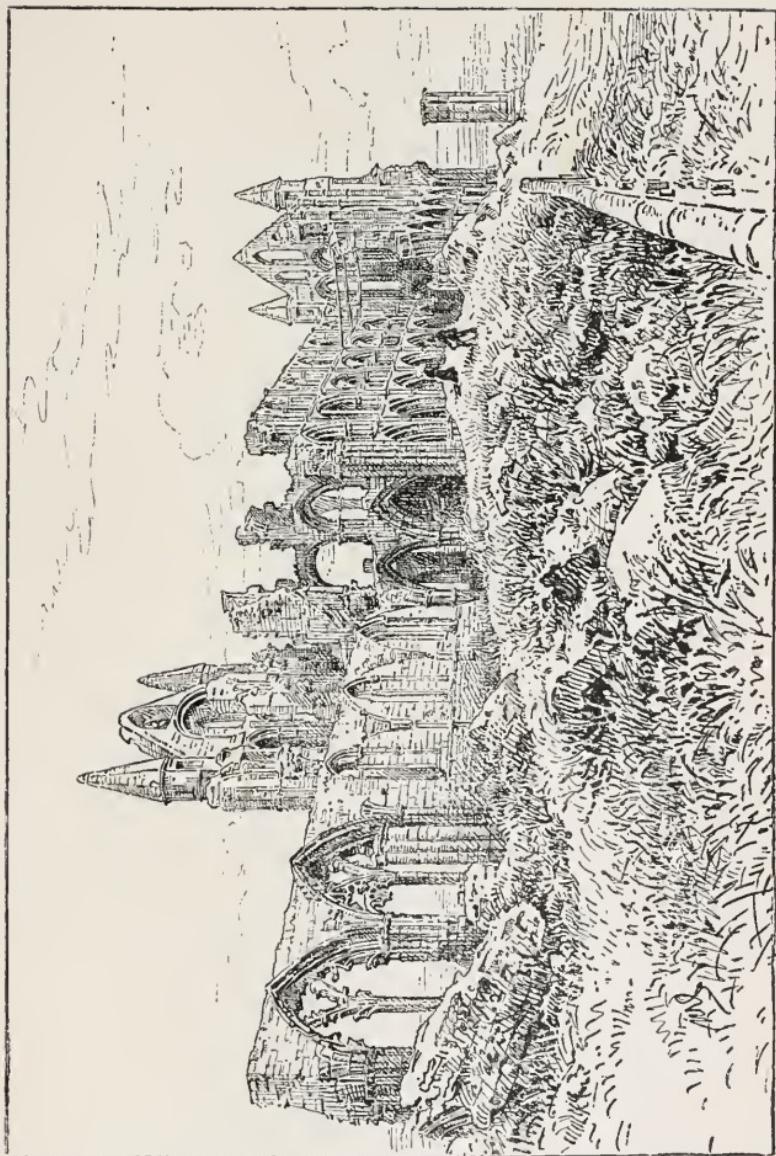
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upon its life. There is a climb, a sense of effort, a freshening breeze, strange prelude to the stale pedantry of archaeology, and the mouldering presence of a long dead past ; for here, almost on the edge of the dark laminated cliffs, rises the last but not least famous of our Yorkshire Abbeys. Two centuries of wasting and destruction divide the history of this Abbey as by a deluge ; we must cast a glance on both sides of the flood.

About the middle of the seventh century, Penda, the pagan King of Mercia, having successively defeated and slain Edward the Converted, and Oswald the sainted King of Northumbria, met his match in Oswiu, the brother of the latter. It was on the banks of the Aire, probably not more than two or three miles from the modern Leeds, that the decisive battle of Winwidfield was fought and won, and the royal vow recorded which issued in the founding of Streoneschalch or Whitby Abbey. Oswiu had the guilt of Oswine's murder on his soul, and he knew that his own life had reached a crisis, so he swore to build a monastery, and consecrate to the service of religion his infant daughter, if the God of whom he had learnt in his exile among the Picts and Scots would give him victory over his heathen foe.

In that bloody fight King Penda fell, and the little princess was sealed an innocent and unconscious thankoffering. It was to Hilda, the royal saint, that Elfleda and the destinies of Whitby were committed. Hilda was then at Hartlepool, but she soon brought her new charge to Streoneshalch ; and in or about the year 656 was begun the monastery, described by William of Malmesbury as the largest of those founded by Oswiu's bounty. If we cannot believe all that we are told about Hilda, even on the authority of the Venerable Bede, it by no means follows that the story of her life and death is beneath our notice.

Hilda was thirty-three when she took the veil and exactly half her life was, in the technical sense, "religious." Guided and advised by the good Aidan, she spent the first year at Cale with her sister Heresuit, after which she became Abbess of the recently founded convent of Heruteu or Hartlepool, where the baby princess was committed to her care. The foundation at Whitby was for monks as well as nuns, and over both presided as Superior "this servant of Christ, Abbess Hilda, whom all that knew her called 'Mother' for her singular piety and grace." The story of her turning the snakes into stones is too well known through the reference in *Marmion*, to



WHITBY ABBEY. LOOKING EAST

bear repeating. Bede's account of Lady Hilda's death is perhaps less trite and not less marvellous. "When she had governed this monastery many years, it pleased Him who has made such merciful provision for our salvation, to give her holy soul the trial of a long sickness, to the end that, according to the Apostle's example, her virtue might be perfected in infirmity."

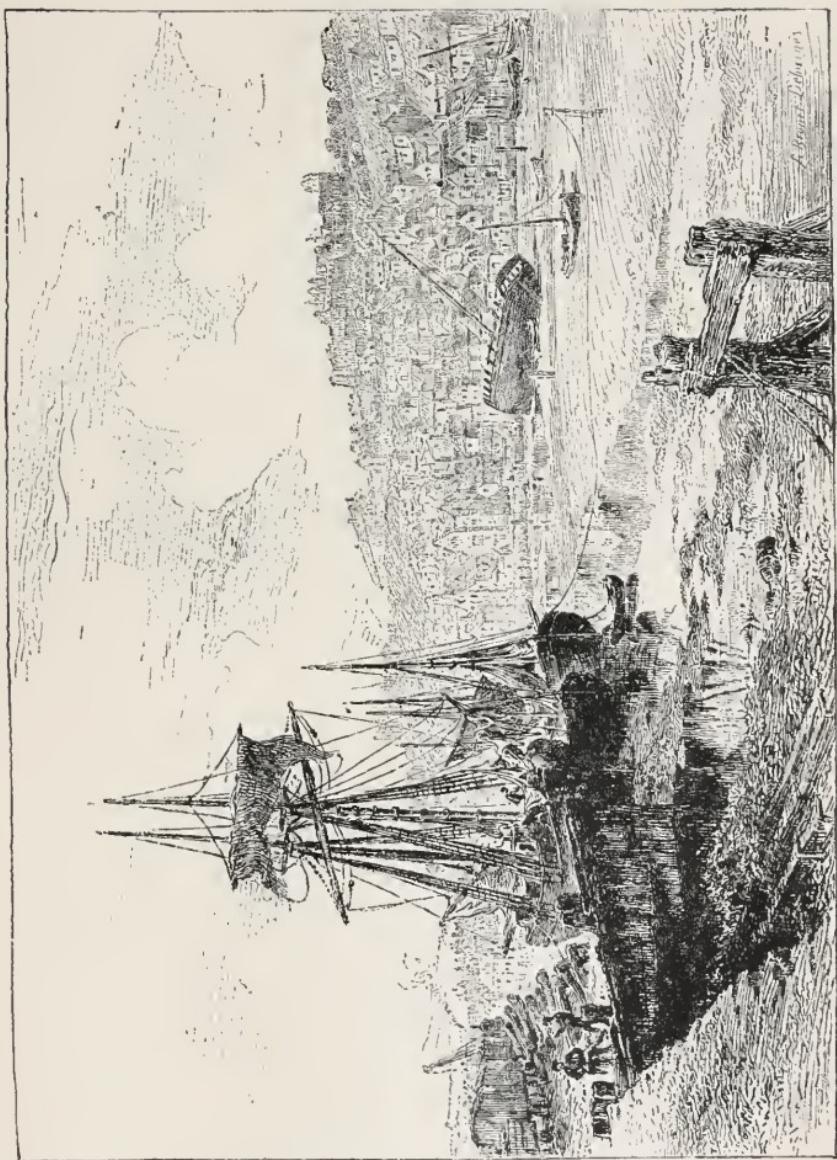
For six long years, we are told, this sickness lasted, and in the seventh, having received the viaticum, she called together the servants of God that were in the same monastery, and, while exhorting them to peace among themselves and universal goodwill, "passed from death to life."

"That same night it pleased Almighty God, by a manifest vision to make known her death in another monastery at a distance from hers, which she had built that same year, and is called Hakenes.¹ There was in that monastery a certain nun called Begu, who had served God upwards of thirty years in monastic conversation. This nun, being then in the dormitory of the sisters, on a sudden heard the well-known sound of a bell in the air, which used to awake and call them to prayers when any one of them was taken out of this world, and opening her eyes, as she thought, she saw the top of the house open and a strong light pour in from above. Looking earnestly upon that light, she saw the soul of the aforesaid servant of God in that same light, attended and conducted to heaven by angels."

¹ Beda, *H. E.*, iv. 23.

Rising in a great fright, the nun "ran to the Virgin who then presided in the monastery instead of the Abbess, and whose name was Frigyth, and with many tears and sighs told her that the Abbess Hilda, mother of them all, had departed this life, and had in her sight ascended to eternal bliss." Then Frigyth awoke all the sisters, and called them to the church to pray for Abbess Hilda, "which they did during the remainder of the night." At day-break came brothers from Streoneshalch, with news of Hilda's death, but the sisters told them they already knew it. "Thus it was by heaven happily ordained, that when some saw her departure out of this world, the others should be acquainted with her admittance into the spiritual life which is eternal." "These monasteries," adds the historian, "are about thirteen miles distant from each other."

For those who care rather for what they themselves are capable of believing than for the visions of that past which has "etched and moulded" in the mind and matter of to-day, there remain, at least, from the life of St. Hilda two accepted and accredited facts. To her, whether inspired by heavenly vision or prepared by unconscious cerebration, Cædmon, the silent and uncouth, poured forth his poems of the Old



WHITBY

and New Testament.¹ “The cowherd, from whose lips flowed the first great English song,” may still be pictured leaving the feast because the harp came round, and going to the cattle-shed with humble consciousness that he was fit for that at least. Still may we think of him, if we dare trust old Bede a little farther, as standing before the royal abbess—the mother Hilda—in the morning and turning passages translated from Holy Writ into impromptu verse ; and when we read that “others after him strove to compose religious poems, but none could vie with him, for he learnt not the art of poetry from men nor of men, but from God,” we may remember that even the nineteenth century has attributed to poets “a vision, and a faculty divine.” The other fact which has hitherto resisted the solvents of historical criticism, is the celebrated Synod of Streoneshalch for fixing the time of the Easter festival. The scene in all its picturesqueness has been borrowed by later writers from the original of Bede. There, as president, sits King Oswiu, the man of action, the hard-handed conqueror of Penda ; there, to plead the cause of Rome, is Wilfrith of York ; while Colman, who has succeeded Aidan at Holy Island, stands forth for

¹ Of course it has been said that he did nothing of the kind, and that the poems ascribed to him are of manifestly later date.

the Celtic usage, the Irish Church, and the great name of Columba. And among these warrior kings and saintly bishops is Hilda, no diffident onlooker or wavering partisan, but the strong and zealous supporter of Colman, striving to avert the sentence which must drive the disciples of St. Aidan from Lindisfarne to Iona. At last the same timid superstition, the same grovelling fear which, hand in hand with lust and greed, has marred in every age the purity of the religion of love, speaks by the lips of Oswiu and espouses the side which can claim St. Peter for its champion. "I will rather obey the porter of heaven, lest, when I reach its gates, he who has the keys in his keeping turn his back on me and there be none to open." And so Hilda and Colman were defeated. Whether they or Wilfrith were in the right we are not called upon to decide, but we may at least be sure that King Oswiu was wrong, and no heavenly porter shall ever bid those gates roll back for the soul that would bargain with the wrath of God.

After Hilda, the princess Elfleda, aided by Bishop Trumwine (a fugitive from the Picts), and by her mother, the widowed Queen Eansleda, ruled well and wisely at Whitby for more than thirty years. She was a friend of St. Cuthbert, and sailed across to

Coquet Island to visit and consult him. Our last glimpse of this old Whitby reveals it to us in great dignity and importance. Hilda was not only a pious lady of royal lineage, but also a moving spirit and living force in Northumbria. The atmosphere of Whitby became, and for some time remained, favourable to the growth of intellect and the deepening of spiritual life. Aidan, Colman, and Cuthbert come and go and make their influence felt within its walls ; Caedmon, Bosa of York, and John of Beverley, call the outside world to witness to the greatness of the monastery. But the church and cloister on the Northumbrian cliff stood out exposed against a threatening sky, and in the next storm which sweeps up from the north, we lose for ever the gleam which night by night for two centuries had fallen through Hilda's windows upon the darkness of the coast. In 867 the Abbey was destroyed by Ingvar and Hubba, and Titus, abbot of the monks, fled with the relics of St. Hilda to Glastonbury. It is on a new world that the curtain rises,—new and yet how old !

The authorities for the history of the refounding of Whitby have been carefully collected and compared by the Rev. J. C. Atkinson. There is the narrative known as the "Memorial of Benefactions," preserved

at Whitby, and locally called the "Abbot's Book," the Record of Symeon of Durham, the story of the founding of St. Mary's Abbey at York, purporting to be written by Stephen of Whitby, the Dugdale narrative derived from the Dodsworth MSS., besides the Domesday notices and references in charters and documents. But none of these help us to bridge over the century and a half of ominous silence which succeeded the coming of Ingvar and Hubba. "Streoneshalch lay desolate for two hundred and seven years," says one historian, and the "Memorial of Benefactions," tells us that at the time of the resounding "there were, as ancient countrymen have delivered to us, about forty cells or oratories, only the walls of which, however, together with the disused and shelterless altars, remained." For all that we can now see, the Saxon, the Norman, and the Early English buildings are connected only by identity of site and continuity of tradition, and it is from such precious fragments as the dark crypt of St. Wilfrid at Ripon that we must learn how men built in Hilda's time. History, in this case more lasting than its monuments, has preserved for us the name and fame of that old group of royal warriors and saints, to whom henceforth must succeed a rough soldier from the Conqueror's army—"miles strenuissi-

mus in obsequio domini sui Wilhelmi Nothi, Regis Anglorum."

Regenfrith, or, as the charters call him, "Reinfrid," must have been a man of strong convictions and steadfast purpose. In the course of a march or journey in the service of the Conqueror, he turned aside to visit Streoneshalch as we now visit the ruins of the later Whitby, but with this difference—he was "pricked to the heart by the tokens of ruin and desolation," and afterwards became a monk at Evesham. Thence, after ten years of discipline, he emerged between 1076 and 1080, with the vision of the roofless cells and desecrated altars of Whitby still before his eyes.

He was accompanied by Ealdwine, Prior of Winchcumbe, and Oswin, a monk; and the three, with their scanty possessions carried on an ass, set manfully forth to restore monasticism in Northumbria. Their first halt was at Monkchester, their second at Jarrow. Here Oswin was left while Ealdwine and Regenfrith continued their journey. At last they, too, separated, and Regenfrith came alone to Streoneshalch, "which is also named 'Hwiteby.'" Before long he had gathered round him, by the unfailing magic of a genuine enthusiasm, a little company eager for the religious life. Then the great family

of the Percies come upon the scene. It is William de Percy who gives Regenfrith and his monks leave and licence to occupy the sacred places of Hilda and Eanfleda, of Cædmon, Bosa, and John of Beverley. But for this patronage they expect their reward. Serlo de Percy, brother of William, must succeed Regenfrith as Prior, to the exclusion and bitter disappointment of Stephen, a monk with capacity, ambition, and a party. This led to the secession of Stephen and his friends to York, where he became abbot, and wrote the record to which we have more than once referred. Meanwhile the devotion of William de Percy could not rest till he had raised his Priory into a rich and powerful Abbey; and then, for some reason, Serlo was displaced, and a younger William, nephew of the founder, was made abbot.

The conduct of the elder William, the brother of Serlo, towards the monastery has been much discussed, and he has been accused of "violence and injustice" by some historians, and entirely acquitted by others. His sins, whatever they were, did not impair an impetuous and, perhaps, imperious piety, which eventually ended his career by a Crusader's death.

When Whitby Priory became an Abbey the King



WHITBY CHURCH. FROM A WINDOW OF THE ABBEY

(Henry I.) granted to the monks the port, or haven, with the wreck and all other appurtenances. To the fifth year of Henry II belongs the strange and picturesque, but somewhat lengthy, story of how William de Bruce and Ralph de Percy, with a "gentleman and freeholder" called Allatson, did, on the 16th October, so belabour with their boar-staves a pious hermit of Eskdale-side—a "wood or desert place belonging to the Abbot of Whiteby"—that he shortly afterwards died. But the point to be observed is the power of the Abbot, who, "being in very great favour with King Henry," removed these great men from the sanctuary at Scarborough, whither they had fled, and brought them in such peril of their lives that they were glad to accept the hermit's deathbed forgiveness, and profit by his intercession. The conditions demanded by him were, that they and theirs should hold their lands of the Abbot of Whitby and his successors by the strange service of annually, on Ascension evening, themselves cutting with a knife of one penny price, and carrying on their backs, and setting up, certain "stakes, strut-towers, and yetthers," as a fence against the tide at the town of Whitby, while the "officer" of Eskdale blew, "Out on you! out on you!" for their heinous crime.

The prosperity of the Abbey would henceforth

have been only too great,¹ and its wealth too rapidly increased, if it had not been for repeated inroads of robbers and pirates, and the invasion of the coast on one occasion by the King of Norway himself. But, in spite of all, the monks of Whitby, retiring now to Hackness, and now again returning to build and adorn their monastery, raised, by degrees, a church of great size and remarkable beauty. Working, as usual, from east to west, they have left us specimens of at least two periods of Early English and one of Decorated architecture. The choir, indeed, with its dog-tooth mouldings, is an early example of the "first pointed" style, while the north transept, in which the mouldings are adorned with lilies, is distinctly later. The western part of the nave is decorated of a rich and rather uncommon type. The very decided bend in this arm of the cross is a feature which, like other irregularities more or less similar, has led to the theory that the monk-builders deliberately signified thereby the inclination of our Lord upon the Cross. It would be exceedingly interesting to discover substantial proof of this quaint and, perhaps, fanciful hypothesis. At present, however, it must be received with caution.

¹ William Rufus was among its benefactors, giving the Church of All Saints in Fishergate, York, on condition of prayers for himself and his heirs.

The triforium, with its dual system of pointed arches, has been referred to in the chapter on Rievaulx.

The north front of the transept differs from the east end of the choir in having a round window in the gable ; but the remnants of the south transept, as well as the south wall of the nave, lie in confused heaps of ruin. The tower, alas ! fell fifty years ago.

From that tower, when Robin Hood and Little John pleased the good monks by feats of archery, men say their arrows flew three miles inland. The strong sea-breeze that sped those fabled flights prevailed at last over the solid masonry, but not till the national weapon had long been laid aside and the national piety had flowed for centuries in other channels.

To-day, as we look down from low and ruinous walls on Whitby—the old and the new, divided by the harbour and encompassed by the hills—two comments among many haunt us most. “ What happy peaceful lives the good monks must have lived in those calm retreats ! ” the kinder critics say. It may be true of some. Yet before and above all else a monastery was a refuge from despair. The fight against the world’s wickedness was lost, and there was nothing left for it but either self-surrender to a

reckless life or flight to lonely forts and fastnesses of prayer. To him who sees the deluge rise, and knows what waste of waters heaves and swings above his home, the ark is no place of mild contentment.

And, then, there is the worldly-wise man's angry and contemptuous cry, "To what purpose is this waste?" A great modern, careless even while he lived to hide his thought, said, we are told, that of two things mostly desired by men he felt no need : they were Religion and Poetry ; in place of which he was satisfied with intellectual activity and the domestic affections.

Those who crave and those who do not crave for a spiritual, an unearthly life,—those who look and those who do not look to the hills from whence cometh help,—are always distinguishable. But in the Middle Ages the gross and unlovely aspect of godlessness, and the comparative fewness of the third class who keep their religion for times of sickness, loss, and fear, brought into strong relief the fact that a remnant were still looking for and hastening unto the coming of a deliverer—still felt the need of a religion. The desires of men are only, in an indirect way, the index of their needs. The miner, whose father and father's father have laboured underground, needs sunlight and free air—he desires, it may be, only the

gin-shop. And even in one lifetime the ascetic may cease to yearn towards the brother whom he hath seen, the agnostic towards the God whom he hath not. But to few, surely, is it granted or ordained to stand always gazing up into heaven, or dwell continually on the Mount of Transfiguration. Circumstances, or a peculiar relation of the understanding to the soul, mark out the Bernards and Teresas from the crowd, and their halo, reflected in a thousand humble lives, defies neglect and mockery. And yet, in spite of its imperfect vision and mistaken premises, the world in this is partly right. Monasticism, in an evil time, both held and wrought much good ; but it can scarcely be denied that, measured even by its success in promoting those ends to which the world is so indifferent, it was a system involving waste—waste of bodily strength, and money, and land, and skill, with which God might have been better served.

When He demands the precious ointment, let it flow from the shattered casket and no word be said of waste. But that is only now and then, while poor humanity is always with us. Do not Dominic and Francis teach us this ?

Perhaps the monks forgot the creature in the Creator ; perhaps we are too apt to do the opposite. Well, at least, the day is ours, and among the ruins

of their costly and laborious worship we can spend and toil to serve. “*Percantatis laudibus*”—“praises having been sung”—such was Carlyle’s ruthless rendering of a passage in the Chronicle of Joscelyn of Brakeland. Poor monks, misguided self-torturers, their “*lauds*,” indeed, are sung and ended long ago, and the Yorkshire valleys resound no more with those Benedictine chants which Palestrina wove, they say, into his Masses. In that, at least, the country-side is poorer. And yet if we, in our way, are living for their Master’s sake the life of self-renunciation, we shall not fail in the hour, it may be, of our sorest need and faintest hope, to hear amid the silence or the din of moor or mill some strain of holy triumph, bidding us, in the words of St. Benedict, “Never to despair of the mercy of God.”

THE END



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